

# A Grape from a Thorn

By  
James Payn



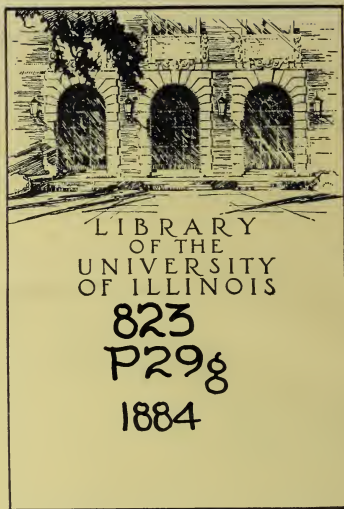
Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly.

# ROV

The best and safe  
ingredients, and c  
people and children

# ROV

Is a pure, fragrant  
a certificate of pu  
2s. 6d. per box; ca  
articles of 20, Hatt



# IL

r poisonous  
olden-haired  
extra.

# IA

illic poisons;  
and cream,  
ROWLANDS'

# THURSTON'S

ESTABLISHED 1814.

PRIZE MEDAL,  
Sydney, 1879, "First Award."

By Appointment.

16, Catherine Street,  
Strand, London.

# Billiard Tables

Ask for

# Cadbury's

Pure

# Cocoa

Beware of Imitations.

[ Beant. ]



*Established Fifty Years.*

# D. NICHOLSON & CO.

Send post free Instructions for Self-Measurement, Patterns and Illustrations of

**NEW  
MANTLES.  
NEW  
COSTUMES.**



**THE CARNARVON.**  
In Scotch Velour, Plain or Mixed Cloths, richly braided, 2 Guineas. In New Ottoman Cloths, 2½ Guineas.



**HENRY II. HAT.**  
In Felt or Velvet, any Colour, with Shaded Ostrich Plumes, £1 8s. 6d.

*Samples of the latest  
Novelties in all classes  
of Textile Fabrics by  
return of post.*

**NEW  
SILKS.  
NEW DRESS  
MATERIALS.**



**PARIS DOLMAN.**  
Trimmed and Lined throughout with Fur, 2½ Guineas.

**Goods by Parcel  
Post, at a minimum  
cost, and no delay.**

**Carriage Paid on Purchases of £3 and upwards.**

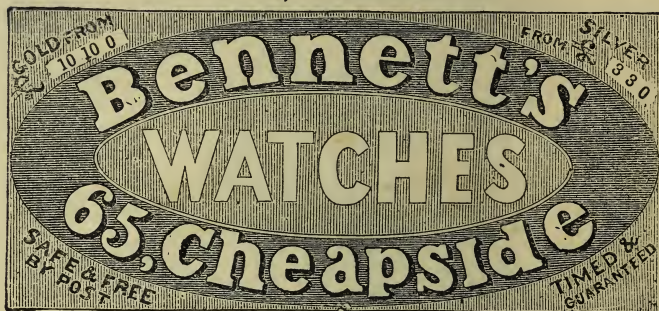
## D. NICHOLSON & CO.

50 to 53, St. Paul's Churchyard, London,

*Sole Lessees of the Costume Court, Crystal Palace.*

# BENNETT'S WATCHES.

65 & 64, CHEAPSIDE.



NO MORE WATCH KEYS.  
TO WATCH CLUBS AND WATCH BUYERS.

Sir JOHN BENNETT offers his Choice and Valuable Stock of Gold and Silver Key Watches at 20 per cent. Reduction, as he intends to keep none but Keyless Watches.

65, CHEAPSIDE, E.C.

**£ Ten** In return for a £10 Note, free and safe per post, one of **BENNETT'S LADIES' GOLD WATCHES**, perfect for time, beauty, and workmanship, with Keyless action, air-tight, damp-tight, and dust-tight.—65, Cheapside, London.

**Gold Chains** at Manufacturers' Prices. Post Office Order, JOHN BENNETT.

**Bennett's Gold Presentation Watches**, 10 Guineas, 20 Guineas, 30 Guineas, 40 Guineas.

**Bennett's Ladies' Gold Keyless Watches**, from 10 Guineas.

**Bennett's Silver Watches**, with Keyless action, from 3 Guineas.

**Bennett's Half Chronometers**, compensated for variations of Temperature, with Improved Keyless action, from 20 Guineas.

**Bennett's 18-carat Hall-marked Chains and Choice Jewellery.**  
Free and safe for Post Office Order.

**TO CLOCK PURCHASERS.**—JOHN BENNETT having just completed great alterations in his Clock Show-Rooms is enabled to offer to Purchasers **the Most Extensive Stock in London**, comprising Clocks for the Drawing and Dining-rooms, and Presentation, of the highest quality and newest designs.

**Sir JOHN BENNETT,**  
Watch and Clock Manufacturer, 65 and 64, Cheapside.



# CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR NOVELS.

*Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.*

By EDMOND ABOUT.  
The Fellow.

By HAMILTON AÏDÉ.  
Carr of Carryon. | Confidences.

By Mrs. ALEXANDER.  
Maid, Wife, or Widow?

By SHELLEY BEAUCHAMP.  
Grantley Grange.

By BESANT AND RICE.  
Ready-Money Mortiboy. | 'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay.

With Harp & Crown. The Seamy Side.  
This Son of Vulcan. Ten Years' Tenant.  
My Little Girl. Chaplain of the Fleet.  
Case of Mr. Lucraft. All Sorts and Condi-  
Golden Butterfly. tions of Men.  
By Celia's Arbour. The Captains' Room.  
Monks of Thelema.

By FREDERICK BOYLE.  
Camp Notes. | Savage Life.

By BRET HARTE.  
An Heiress of Red Dog. | Gabriel Conroy.  
Luck of Roaring Camp. | Flip.  
Californian Stories.

By ROBERT BUCHANAN.  
Shadow of the Sword. The Martyrdom of  
A Child of Nature. Madeline.  
God and the Man. Love Me for Ever.

By Mrs. BURNETT.  
Surlly Tim.

By Mrs. LOVETT CAMERON.  
Deceivers Ever. | Juliet's Guardian.

By MACLAREN COBBAN.  
The Cure of Souls.

By C. ALLSTON COLLINS.  
The Bar Sinister.

By WILKIE COLLINS.  
Antonina. | Miss or Mrs. ?  
Basil. The New Magdalen.  
Hide and Seek. The Frozen Deep.  
The Dead Secret. The Law & the Lady.  
Queen of Hearts. The Two Destinies.  
My Miscellanies. The Haunted Hotel.  
Women in White. The Fallen Leaves.  
The Moonstone. Jezebel's Daughter.  
Man and Wife. The Black Robe.  
Poor Miss Finch.

By MORTIMER COLLINS.  
Sweet Anne Page. | Transmigration.  
From Midnight to Midnight.  
A Fight with Fortune.

By MORTIMER & FRANCES COLLINS.  
Sweet and Twenty. | The Village Comedy.  
Frances. | You Play me False.  
Blacksmith and Scholar.

By DUTTON COOK.  
Leo. | Paul Foster's Daughter.

By J. LEITH DERWENT.  
Our Lady of Tears.

By CHARLES DICKENS.  
Sketches by Boz. | Oliver Twist  
Pickwick Papers. | Nicholas Nickleby.

By Mrs. ANNIE EDWARDES.  
A Point of Honour. | Archie Lovell.

By M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.  
Felicia. | Kitty.

By EDWARD EGGLESTON.  
Roxy.

By PERCY FITZGERALD.  
Bella Donna. | Never Forgotten.  
The Second Mrs. Tillotson.  
Polly.  
Seventy-five Brooke Street.

By ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE.  
Filthy Lucre.

By R. E. FRANCILLON.  
Olympia. | Queen Cophetua. | One by One.

Prefaced by Sir H. BARTLE FRERE.  
Pandurang Hari.

By HAIN FRISWELL.  
One of Two.

By EDWARD GARRETT.  
The Capel Girls.

By CHARLES GIBBON.  
Robin Gray. | For the King.  
For Lack of Gold. Queen of the Meadow.  
What will the World In Pastures Green.  
Say? The Flower of the  
Forest.  
In Honour Bound. A Heart's Problem.  
The Dead Heart. The Braes of Yarrow.  
In Love and War.

By WILLIAM GILBERT.  
Dr. Austin's Guests.  
The Wizard of the Mountain.  
James Duke.

By JAMES GREENWOOD.  
Dick Temple.

By ANDREW HALLIDAY.  
Every-Day Papers.

By Lady DUFFUS HARDY.  
Paul Wynter's Sacrifice.

By THOMAS HARDY.  
Under the Greenwood Tree.

By JULIAN HAWTHORNE.  
Garth. | Prince Saroni's Wife.  
Ellice Quentin. | Dust.  
Sebastian Strome.

By Sir ARTHUR HELPS.  
Ivan de Eiron.

By TOM HOOD.  
A Golden Heart.

By Mrs. GEORGE HOOPER.  
The House of Raby.

By VICTOR HUGO.  
The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

By Mrs. ALFRED HUNT.  
Thornicroft's Model. | Leaden Casket.  
Self-Condemed.

By JEAN INGELow.  
Fated to be Free.

By HARRIETT JAY.  
The Dark Colleen. | Queen of Connaught.

By HENRY KINGSLEY.  
Oakshott Castle. | Number Seventeen.

By E. LYNN LINTON.  
Patricia Kemball. | Under which Lord?  
The Attonement of With a Si ken Thread.  
Leam Dundas. Rebel of the Family.  
World Well Lost. "My Love!"

CHATTO & WINDUS, Piccadilly, W.

# CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR NOVELS.

*Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.*

By HENRY W. LUCY.  
Gibson Fleyce.

By J. MASTERMAN.  
Half-a-dozen Daughters.

By JUSTIN MCCARTHY, M.P.  
Dear Lady Disdain. | Linley Rotherford.  
Waterdale Neighbours | Miss Misanthrope.  
My Enemy's Daughter. | Donna Quixote.  
A Fair Saxon. | The Comet of a Season.

By GEORGE MACDONALD.  
Paul Faber, Surgeon. | Thomas Wingfold, Curate.

By Mrs. MACDONELL.  
Quaker Cousins.

By KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.  
The Evil Eye. | Lost Rose.

By W. H. MALLOCK.  
The New Republic.

By FLORENCE MARRYAT.  
Open! Sesame! | Fighting the Air.  
Harvest of Wild Oats. | Written in Fire.  
A Little Stepson.

By JEAN MIDDLEMASS.  
Touch and Go. | Mr. Dorillion.

By D. CHRISTIE MURRAY.  
A Life's Atonement. | Coals of Fire.  
A Model Father. | By the Gate of the  
Joseph's Coat. | Sea.

By Mrs. OLIPHANT.  
Whiteladies.

By Mrs. ROBERT O'REILLY.  
Phoebe's Fortunes.

By OUIDA.  
Held in Bondage. | Two Little Wooden  
Strathmore. | Shoes.  
Chandos. | Signa.  
Under Two Flags. | In a Winter City.  
Idalia. | Ariadne.  
Cecil Castlemaine. | Friendship.  
Tricotrin. | Moths.  
Puck. | Pipistrello.  
Folle Farine. | A Village Commune.  
A Dog of Flanders. | Bimbi.  
Pascarel. | In Maremma.

By MARGARET AGNES PAUL.  
Gentle and Simple.

By JAMES PAYN.  
Lost Sir Massingberd. | Gwendoline's Harvest.  
A Perfect Treasure. | Like Father, Like Son.  
Bentinck's Tutor. | A Marine Residence.  
Murphy's Master. | Married Beneath Him.  
A County Family. | Mirk Abbey.  
At Her Mercy. | Not Wooded, but Won.  
A Woman's Vengeance. | £200 Reward.  
Cecil's Trust. | Less Black than We're  
Clyfards of Clyffe. | Painted.  
Family Scapegrace. | By Proxy.  
Foster Brothers. | Under One Roof.  
Found Dead. | High Spirits.  
Best of Husbands. | Carion's Year.  
Walter's Word. | A Confidential Agent.  
Halves. | Some Private Views.  
Fallen Fortunes. | From Exile.  
What He Cost Her. | A Grape from a Thorn.  
Humorous Stories. | For Cash Only.

By EDGAR A. POE.  
The Mystery of Marie Roget.

By E. C. PRICE.  
Valentina.

By CHARLES READE.  
It is Never too Late to Mend.  
Hard Cash.  
Peg Woffington.  
Christie Joanstone.  
Griffith Gaunt.  
Put Yourself in His Place.  
Double Marriage.  
Love Me Little, Love Me Long.

Foul Play.  
The Cloister and the Hearth.  
Course of True Love.  
Autobiography of a Thief.  
A Terrible Temptation  
Wandering Heir.  
A Simpleton.  
A Woman-Hater.  
Readiana.

By Mrs. J. H. RIDDELL.  
Her Mother's Darling.  
The Prince of Wales's Garden Party.

By F. W. ROBINSON.  
Women are Strange.

By BAYLE ST. JOHN.  
A Levantine Family.

By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.  
Gaslight and Daylight

By JOHN SAUNDERS.  
Round to the Wheel. | Lion in the Path.  
One Against the World | Two Dreamers.  
Guy Waterman.

By ARTHUR SKETCHLEY  
A Match in the Dark.

By T. W. SPEIGHT.  
The Mysteries of Heron Dyke.

By R. A. STERNDALÉ.  
The Afghan Knife.

By R. LOUIS STEVENSON.  
New Arabian Nights.

By BERTHA THOMAS.  
Cressida. | Proud Maisie.  
The Violin Player.

By W. MOY THOMAS.  
A Fight for Life.

By WALTER THORNBURY.  
Tales for the Marines.

By T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.  
Diamond Cut Diamond.

By ANTHONY TROLLOPE.  
Way We Live Now. | Marion Fay.  
American Senator. | Kept in the Dark.  
Frau Frohmann.

By FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.  
Like Ships Upon the Sea.

By MARK TWAIN.  
Tom Sawyer. | An Idle Excursion.  
A Pleasure Trip on the Continent of Europe.  
A Tramp Abroad.  
The Stolen White Elephant

By SARAH TYLER.  
What She Came Through.  
The Bride's Pass.

By J. S. WINTER.  
Cavalry Life. | Regimental Legends.

By Lady WOOD.  
Sablé

By EDMUND YATES.  
Castaway. | The Forlorn Hope.  
Land at Last.

ANONYMOUS.  
Paul Ferroll.  
Way Paul Ferroll Killed his Wife.



A GRAPE FROM A THORN

LONDON: PRINTED BY  
SCOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
AND PARLIAMENT STREET



# A GRAPE FROM A THORN

BY

JAMES PAYN

AUTHOR OF

'LOST SIR MASSINGBERD' 'BY PROXY' 'HIGH SPIRITS' ETC.



*A NEW EDITION*

LONDON

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1884

Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016 with funding from  
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Alternates



823

P29

1884

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

LIBRARY

TO

MISS WRIGLEY

*Of Timberhurst, Bury, and Wansfell, Windermere*

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY HER OLD FRIEND

THE AUTHOR

1150356

20024903

Rev. Wm. Wansfell, Bury, Windermere



## PREFACE.

IT has come to the knowledge of the author of 'A Grape from a Thorn' that some pain has been given to the friends of the late Count d'Albanie from the impression they have been under that he was the original of a certain personage pourtrayed in the novel. This is altogether a misconception: the author did not know the Count even by sight, nor, so far as he is aware, had that gentleman any feature of character in common with the 'Mr. Edwards' of the story. Moreover, lest the very misapprehension should arise which has taken place, and which he sincerely deplores, the author was careful to point out (page 210) that others besides the Count have claimed to be the last of the Stuarts, and that 'Mr. Edwards' was one of them.



# CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. ON THE ROAD . . . . .	1
II. THE ARRIVAL . . . . .	6
III. THE LADIES' DRAWING-ROOM . . . . .	13
IV. A VISITOR . . . . .	19
V. THE MAP OF THE COUNTRY . . . . .	27
VI. A HAZARDOUS DESCENT . . . . .	33
VII. WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY . . . . .	39
VIII. TWO METHODS OF PLEASING . . . . .	45
IX. MRS. AND MISS JENNYNGE . . . . .	49
X. DRIVERS AND WALKERS . . . . .	56
XI. THE PICNIC . . . . .	61
XII. A COUPLE OF PATIENTS . . . . .	68
XIII. A SUGGESTION . . . . .	76
XIV. A CONFESSION . . . . .	81
XV. THE CALL . . . . .	90
XVI. ELLA IS GIVEN HER 'CHANCE' . . . . .	98
XVII. MR. JOSCELINE BECOMES CONFIDENTIAL . . . . .	104
XVIII. A DOUBLE GAME . . . . .	112
XIX. THE LOST LOCKET . . . . .	116
XX. MR. AIRD'S LOVE STORY . . . . .	121
XXI. ILLNESS IN THE HOTEL . . . . .	129
XXII. THE INVITATION . . . . .	136
XXIII. THE WIDOW'S RING . . . . .	143
XXIV. A CHANGE OF VIEWS . . . . .	149
XXV. IN QUARANTINE . . . . .	155
XXVI. A CHANGE OF PATIENTS . . . . .	163
XXVII. A FEMALE CHAMFION . . . . .	168
XXVIII. DYING WORDS . . . . .	173
XXIX. A FRIEND IN NEED . . . . .	178
XXX. A CHARITABLE COMMITTEE . . . . .	186
XXXI. DECLINED WITH THANKS . . . . .	191
XXXII. MISS BURT . . . . .	199
XXXIII. BARTON CASTLE . . . . .	205
XXXIV. A REVELATION . . . . .	209
XXXV. THE CHURCHYARD . . . . .	215
XXXVI. THRUST AND PARRY . . . . .	220
XXXVII. A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH HIS HIGENESSES . . . . .	225
XXXVIII. MONEY EARNED . . . . .	232



CHAP.		PAGE
XXXIX.	A RESOLUTION . . . . .	237
XL.	A PARTY OF THREE . . . . .	241
XLI.	A PARTY OF FOUR . . . . .	247
XLII.	THE COMMISSION . . . . .	253
XLIII.	AN EXPLANATION . . . . .	259
XLIV.	AN HISTORICAL POEM . . . . .	264
XLV.	THE SITTING . . . . .	271
XLVI.	THE SITTING CONTINUED . . . . .	277
XLVII.	TABLE-TALK . . . . .	282
XLVIII.	MR. HEYTON SHOWS HIS HAND . . . . .	287
XLIX.	COPHETUA . . . . .	295
L.	DEPARTURE . . . . .	299
LI.	FORACRE FARM . . . . .	303
LII.	A SHADOW IN THE SUNSHINE . . . . .	310
LIII.	BAD NEWS . . . . .	315
LIV.	MUSHROOM PICKING . . . . .	320
LV.	CREEK COTTAGE . . . . .	325

A

# GRAPE FROM A THORN.

## CHAPTER I.

### ON THE ROAD.

‘ARE not four horses a little expensive, papa?’

This modest observation, in the French tongue, and expressed in a tone so gentle that it could hardly be called remonstrant, was made by a young lady of eighteen as she sat in a hired barouche in the High Street of Lawton, and in front of the ‘Angel in Boots,’ from which establishment (to the admiration of its proprietor) a supplementary pair of posters had just been ordered. It was unusual in that part of the country to travel with a postilion; so that two of them, with horses to match, awakened in the population of the little town what the poet calls ‘the hushed amaze of hand and eye;’ they also opened their mouths exceedingly wide, and encircled the vehicle containing Mr. Josceline and his daughter to catch any crumb of information respecting those distinguished strangers, much like expectant goldfish. There had been no such excitement in the place since the travelling circus had pitched its tent there in the autumn of last year, and it was now mid-June.

It is possible that these good people, even if the horses and the ‘turn-out’ had not been their chief attraction, might have failed to seize the more subtle shades of character in the two passengers thus offered to their observation; but one of them at least, had they been more skilful students of human nature, would have been well worth their study. The Hon. George Emilius Josceline was a gentleman whose aristocratic appearance and repose of manner showed to the utmost advantage in an open barouche. The afternoon was not very far advanced, yet an ample fur cloak was carelessly arranged about him, and the travelling cap which surmounted his already silvering head was drawn down to his ears. He was but forty-five, but had accomplished his life’s journey at so quick a rate that he had considerably damaged his

constitution, and had grown old before his time. This circumstance, however, gave a delicacy to his appearance that by no means detracted from its interesting character; his faded colour and wasted features looked very appropriate in the barouche and four, though if his legs had been visible, and one could have disengaged one's attention from the violet stockings and patent-leather shoes in which they terminated, you might (in ignorance of his rank) have called him spindle-shanked. He had a calm, exhausted smile which (as though he had been a prince of the blood who had passed his life in acknowledging the plaudits of the populace) suggested the ravages of affability.

His daughter, Ella, was not unlike him as to feature, and her complexion was perhaps somewhat too delicate to be associated with robust health, but there was no trace in it of illness or languor. Her face was 'pale and thinner than should be for one so young,' but this did not arise from physical causes. She had what persons, in very different circles from those in which Mr. George Emilius Josceline was accustomed to move, are wont to term 'enough to think about;' her father was the only relative she had in the world, and her friends were comprised within the four walls of a school at Clapham, from which she had but lately emerged to join Mr. Josceline on the Continent, where he had been living a nomad life (though by no means in tents) for many years. She knew little of his past, or of her own so far as it related to him; she had seen him, previous to the last six months, for only a few hours at a time, when he had called at Minerva Lodge to make inquiries about her of the schoolmistress, and to express his regret to her—which he did with graceful tenderness—that for the present, and until she should grow up, he had no home to offer her; and of her future she knew still less. Absolutely nothing, indeed, except that it must needs be but sparsely provided for. She had gathered from observation—for no definite statement on the matter had ever been made to her—that her father was living at least up to his income; but this was a subject on which she had had no encouragement to speak. The first time, indeed, that she had ever hinted at it was on the present occasion, and even then with the utmost delicacy, and in the French tongue, in which, when they were alone together, Mr. Josceline (who had a curious repugnance to England and the English) preferred to converse.

'Are not four horses, papa, a little expensive?'

Mr. Josceline's smile expanded into a genial ray, and his calm grey eyes twinkled with subdued humour as he replied, 'That is quite true, Ella; you are thinking that twice two are four. I am glad to find that Miss Steele included arithmetic in her curriculum of education, though the Parisian accent was an extra. You are improving, however, even in that, my dear, though, as it happens, a little late. It is not likely that any one at Wallington Bay will be critical on that point.'

Ella did not speak; a little colour stole into her cheek, and a dew into her large brown eyes, for she felt that a reproof had been administered to her. She ought to have known better than to have interfered with her father's arrangements, for which, to do him justice, he had generally some sufficient reason. Whatever had been the motive for his thus travelling *en prince*, it certainly did not arise from ostentation. 'Display,' she had often heard him say, was 'incompatible with comfort,' and to be comfortable was his simple aim. But then Mr. George Emilius Josceline's notions of comfort were closely allied to other people's ideas of luxury.

The four horses started amid a feeble cheer from the crowd, and speedily carried them out of the quaint little town; the road was a very picturesque one, changing abruptly from open moorland to well-wooded lanes, where the trees in their early green made triumphal archways for their passage, and then again to rolling downland, with ever and anon a glimpse of the sea. They were traversing the fairest portion of the fairest county in the south of England, and the varied beauties of the landscape touched the sensitive young girl to the core. She knew not what it was that ailed her, for she had never experienced such sensations before. She had known London and Paris, and of course had beheld the country that lies between them; but that was on a hurried railway journey, and even the English part of it was no match for the scenes that now surrounded her, enjoyed at ease and to the full. Every pastoral farm, every honey-suckled cottage by the brookside, looked to her as though she could have taken up her abode in them, and dwelt there happy for evermore. Under the softening influences of so much beauty she soon forgot her late rebuff, and, with that yearning for sympathy which belongs to youth, once more addressed herself to her companion.

'I was quite unprepared for the loveliness of this drive, papa; I never saw anything like it. Is there anything like it out of England?'

'I don't know that there is, my dear,' returned Mr. Josceline, with a slight yawn. 'There are twenty times finer views, however, in Italy and Switzerland.'

'But not in France surely? Those straight level roads, with the Noah's ark-like trees on each side of them, I thought very wearisome.'

'You reason from insufficient data, my dear child. You fell into the same error when you made that remark about the horses.'

Ella bit her lip; she felt that she would rather have bitten her tongue off than have made that unhappy observation.

'I am very sorry, dear papa; I did not mean to annoy you.'

'Nor have you annoyed me, my darling; on the whole, indeed, I am rather glad you said what you did. It gives me an

opportunity of explaining myself on a matter which there is always a certain difficulty in approaching—— Dear me, are those deer in that park yonder?’

Mr. Josceline put up his eyeglasses, and gazed with some interest at a distant glade, where, under huge oaks, a herd of deer were standing deep in fern.

‘Yes, papa; and what a quantity of them!’

‘What house is that yonder, postilion, and to whom does it belong?’ inquired Mr. Josceline.

‘It is Barton Castle, sir; Sir Everard Drake’s,’ returned the man, turning round in his saddle. ‘Sir Everard himself don’t live there.’

‘Quite right; it must be very dull,’ mused the other, half to himself. ‘Somebody lives there, however, I suppose; I see smoke from the chimney.’

‘Oh, yes, sir, a party has taken it; but nobody sees nothing of him. He’s a Miss—a Miss——; but there, I forget what they call him.’

‘But if it’s a Miss it must be a lady, my good fellow.’

‘But it ain’t, sir; it’s a gentleman. He’s very good to the poor, and the beer in the servants’ hall is as good as any in the county; but he don’t go out nowhere, and shuts himself up—it’s a Mr. Charles Edwards.’

‘He means a misanthrope, papa,’ said Ella, laughing.

‘Ah! that’s the name, Miss, because I heard the parson talking about him, and his never coming to church like a Christian.’

If going to church was the test of Christianity, Mr. Josceline himself was out of the fold; and perhaps the chance shot of the postilion hit his conscience, for he suddenly became very grave and silent. Yet he was not a man whose conscience was often hit, or when hit, much hurt. He kept it in subjection under him as a wise man keeps his stomach.

‘And what makes this Mr. Edwards a misanthrope?’ continued Ella, not perceiving the alteration in her father’s manner, and not a little amused by that of the postilion.

‘Well, Miss, I don’t understand the rights of it, not I; but they do say as Mr. Edwards is a Dook in disguise.’

‘How far is Barton Castle from Wallington Bay?’ inquired Mr. Josceline, sharply.

‘Well, a matter of five miles and more, sir; and a deal further, as you may see for yourself, from the Bay to the Castle.’

He pointed with his whip down the road, which was a continuous descent, so that in time, at least, if not in distance, their position in respect to one another was, in fact, as the man had described.

‘I see,’ said Mr. Josceline, with a stately inclination of his head to signify the conclusion of his inquiries; ‘the road is steep, keep your eye on your horses.’



'What could the man mean, papa,' inquired Ella, 'by saying that the gentleman who lives yonder is a duke in disguise?'

'Heaven knows; in England everybody's head runs on dukes.' Yet, despite his indifference, Mr. Josceline continued to regard Barton Castle with some attention; and, even when they had passed by it, he turned round more than once to look at its main tower, which showed with its flagstaff above the surrounding trees.

'When Mr. Edwards is there they puts the flag up,' explained the man, whose tongue, once set agoing on so favourite a topic, it was not easy to stop; 'when he isn't they doesn't—just like the Queen at Windsor.'

Even to this Ella perceived her father paid some attention, though it was very unusual for him, she knew, to take interest in local gossip. That the incident had been sufficient to divert him from his proposed 'explanation,' did not, however, surprise her. He not only always found 'a difficulty,' as he expressed it, in approaching any matter of business, but especially any topic of a serious nature that had reference to themselves; and, even when commenced, he would seize upon the slightest pretext to fly from it. Ella knew her father thoroughly as respected his likes and dislikes, his habits and 'ways,' though, as we have said, she was in almost complete ignorance of his position in the world. She understood that he was a man of rank who had fallen out with his relatives, who held no communication with him, but how the estrangement had taken place she did not understand. She also knew that she was an only child, and that her mother had died when she was very young; beyond these facts her schoolmistress, Miss Steele, had told her nothing, and there was that in her father's manner which prevented her making further inquiries. She loved him dearly, and would have done so had he been even less kind and indulgent; but her filial affection for him—from the absence of all confidence on his part—was incomplete.

The road now dipped between two hills which, opening before them like giant gates, disclosed a glorious view—a landlocked bay, the blue waters of which contrasted most charmingly with steep cliffs of red sandstone. In a picture such diversity of colour would have seemed unnatural; but the cunning artist, Nature, who sets at naught 'the falsehood of extremes,' had so wrought it that the scene seemed like a prevision of Paradise itself.

'How very, very lovely!' exclaimed Ella, in a transport of subdued delight. 'Oh, papa, how glad I am you thought of coming to Wallington Bay!'

'With regard to the four horses,' observed Mr. Josceline, gravely, whose eyes were fixed on the fur cloak before him, and did not extend their patronage to the landscape notwithstanding Ella's eulogy of it, 'they are, as you say, rather expensive, but,

looked at from a proper point of view, they will appear anything but extravagant. At a place like the *Ultramarine*, an hotel used mainly by the rich middle classes, the extra pair will, in the eyes of its inmates, more than double, I will not say our income—for that would be far from having an imposing effect—but our supposed income.'

'But, dear papa,' pleaded the girl, softly, 'is not that a species of deception?'

'Our leaders will be *mis*leaders, my dear, to those who choose to be guided by them, of course; but that will not be our fault. It is a very cheap method, at all events, of establishing ourselves at once at the top of the tree—the best position, that is, for looking about us and deciding upon the most eligible spot'—he was about to say—'to roost; ' but an expression in his daughter's face, of anxiety, if not alarm, caused him to alter the expression to 'perch'—a word, moreover, he pronounced in a light and airy tone suggestive of the action.

Nor even then did it seem to him that he had done enough to remove a certain impression of seriousness of aim which the speech had involuntarily conveyed, since, for the rest of the way, he exerted himself to amuse and interest his companion as though she had been a person of consequence in no way related to him. He was a master of the conversational art; but it took all he knew to effect his object, and it was with no slight sense of relief that he at last perceived the goal of their journey.

'Yonder is the inn!' he exclaimed; 'a handsome house enough, one must allow, and standing in quite a little park of its own; but, for all that, I have a presentiment that the cooking will play the deuce with my digestion, and that we shall be poisoned with bad wine.'

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ARRIVAL.

MR. JOSCELINE'S eulogium upon the inn at Wallington Bay was not undeserved. It was a large rambling building of very ancient date, but which had been added to at various epochs. It had once been the Prior's house, attached to the abbey (the ruins of which still stood in the grounds); and, when the latter had been destroyed by bluff King Hal's commissioner sent down to investigate into the alleged malpractices of its tenants, he had spared the dwelling-house as being unconnected with any spiritual shortcomings, and also because it was exceedingly comfortable and convenient, and obtained a grant of it for himself. There he had lived till judgment had overtaken him, which had also, with fine nose, pursued every subsequent inhabitant. None who took the Prior's house had prospered, though the last tenant had

done his best to wash away the stains that clung to it by turning it into a hydropathic establishment. His ruin had been more complete, if less picturesque, than that of the abbey itself. Curiously enough the house, built of red sandstone, and fairly glowing against its background of short, thick-stemmed trees, their branches all blown about by the all-prevailing wind, stood stoutly as ever. The stately pile seemed as little fitted for an inn as might be; but there was no choice for the proprietor (after its hydropathic stage) between that and a madhouse, and an inn, therefore, it had become. Mrs. Trant, the landlady, had been greatly puzzled for a proper name for it, and had consulted Mr. Michael Felspar, the artist (who had made Wallington Bay his own by reason of the many pictures he had painted of it), on this important subject.

‘I am advised to call it the *Marine Hotel*; but it looks something quite beyond that, now don’t it, sir?’

‘Of course it does. Why not call it the *Ultramarine*?’ And as she saw no objection, nor yet the joke, the *Ultramarine* it was called accordingly.

What was very singular—and this may prove of the utmost benefit to the proprietors of great houses suffering under theological and hereditary curses—was, that the hotel was succeeding; no doubt from the circumstance of its being in the hands of a company. There being such a lot of them, the ban probably did not know where to settle, and, thoroughly disgusted, took itself off altogether. On the other hand, some credit must be due to Mrs. Trant’s management of the establishment. It was one of the few inns in England where the salad oil could be depended upon, and the sheets tucked up at the foot of the beds. And then the situation was absolutely unrivalled; perhaps it would be better to add, and indescribable; for I have observed this, of descriptions of places, even by master-hands like that of Walter Scott, that when one has read and apparently understood them in every detail, and one afterwards visits the place described, it is utterly and entirely different from what one has been led to expect. On the other hand, if you are already acquainted with the spot, you recognise the description readily. At the date of which I speak (though there is now, alas! a change in that respect), the world at large knew nothing of Wallington Bay; one of the things that made its situation ‘unrivalled’ was that it was twenty miles from the nearest railway, and therefore very difficult of approach—an inconvenience which greatly added to its charm in the opinion of those who, from the hotel point of view, were most worth knowing. For the aristocracy, indeed, it was too dull; but for the wealthy middle class, who were diligently learning to be exclusive, and also to profess to admire the beauties of nature, it had great attractions. With them Wallington Bay had already achieved such a reputation that it was known among them familiarly as ‘the Bay’—just as the

old Duke of Wellington was called 'the Duke'—as though there was but one bay in the world.

A little cove that thought itself a bey

Felspar had once termed it; but this flight of Eastern imagery was due to his picture of the abbey having been 'skied' in the Academy, which made his humour a little tart that year. It was in truth a glorious bay, with twenty feet of water up to the very beach, and a little island in the middle of it, with a cavern even yet in the occasional occupation of sea-nymphs; for in front of it was a sloping sand that shone at low water in the sun like diamond dust, and here the young ladies of the hotel, conveyed by trusty boatmen, would bathe in calm weather, concealed from sight (save of the Tritons) by a wooded cliff.

Eastward and westward one might walk for miles along the cliff top, or stray down by zigzag paths into creek and cove, each known to local fame for quaint-shaped rock or wave-worn hollow. On the first promontory on the western side stood the coastguard station, white as a star, a very castle of indolence as it seemed to those who visited it in calm weather, and beheld its inmates pacing their chalk-marked path, or stretched at full length on the sunny sward, sweeping the sea with their glasses; but when the ocean rose in wrath, and the little storm-bell on the boat-house below began to swing in sign of danger to the mariner, to see the coastguard men race down the cliff, and take their allotted stations in the galley, was a sight to quicken your own pulses, aye, and if you chanced to have one, to bring your heart into your mouth, in sympathy with such self-sacrifice and courage. On the opposite promontory was another sort of station belonging to another epoch. There the Danes, having landed some thousand years ago or so, and found the place to their liking, had dug great trenches and made a camp for themselves—and for the delight of archæologists. No more its sentries looked to northward for the native foe, nor to southward and to sea for their kinsmen; no more their raven flapped its wing upon the wind-swept summit. Peace reigned on the Danecliff now, its wildest visitant the white-winged gull; and all the summer long the grass-grown ramparts were alive with butterfly and bee, and sweet with thyme, and in the autumn crowned with purple heath.

Wallington Village, though not, I suppose, 'as old as the hills,' looked quite in keeping with them; its cottages were all of stone, on which the mosses of many years had accumulated, and each had its little garden in which fuchsias flourished like trees, evidencing the mildness of the climate; while on their roofs, as if in emulation of the plots below, grew stonecrop and wallflowers. Vicarage it had none, for the clergyman lived at Barton; but it included two superior tenements—the one be-



longing to the doctor, which, although it did not establish its claim to being 'a cottage of gentility' by reason of 'a double coach-house,' possessed a single one in which stood the only vehicle of which Wallington could boast—the doctor's gig; and the other Clover Cottage, inhabited by one Widow Gammer, who let the only lodgings in the place, and never lacked a summer tenant.

Down the winding village street, dividing it into two nearly equal parts, ran Barton Brook, a swift but shallow stream, whose brightness and vigour gave promise of some full-fed river laden with many a barque, but which immaturely perished in the devouring sea. It was spanned by two rustic bridges—one a practicable one close to the bay; the other, like that one sees in the willow-pattern plate, was merely used for the foundations of a house, where Nature's productions, such as spar and shells, were sold, and which was considered by the designers of fancy note-paper one of the most picturesque objects in the county.

The church, strange to say, was not in the village, but stood half a mile away on the top of the Danecliff. It was a small Norman chapel, built probably as a thank-offering by some pious hand, rather than for the accommodation of a congregation; but the parson from Barton came over on Sunday afternoon and preached there to such as could find room, and the coastguard made it a point of honour to be married and have their children christened there, instead of in the mother church at Barton.

In a community so simple, and a spot so retired, without any local lawgiver, such as a squire or a rector, it was but natural that the great hotel should occupy a very prominent position in the eyes of the Wallingtonians. Its customers were their patrons, and encouraged Industry in the shape of prawn and lobster fishing, portorage for picnic purposes, and the hire of boats for conveyance to marine objects of interest; Commerce in the person of Mr. Mudge, the 'universal provider' of the place, who sold everything that could be got for sixpence, from a stay-lace to a box of horse soldiers; and Literature (in the fossil form) in the circulating library of the place, in which were to be found the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe, Miss Jane Porter, and even odd volumes of so recent an author as Sir Walter Scott.

Mrs. Trant, the landlady of the *Ultramarine*, was therefore, next to Queen Victoria, looked up to as the head of the State. In winter she reigned supreme, though in an empty palace; but in summer she herself was the subject of her customers, whose wish was law—except that it couldn't so much as get an oyster opened on a Sunday—to the little community. From May to November, in fact, the form of government at Wallington Bay was an oligarchy, composed of the visitors to the *Ultramarine*, the prominence of each individual of which depended on his length of purse or strength of will.

This body, always a numerous one, was at present dominated



over by Mrs. Armytage, an elderly lady, but, except to her waiting-maid, of youthful appearance. She had a carriage and pair, a pug dog called Fido, a pet canary of her own, and a husband who was devoted to science. Next to her in weight and influence—but with this difference, that No. 2 possessed merely the dead weight of wealth, and had not the administrative capacities of the former lady—was Mrs. Jennynge, who had also a carriage and pair of her own, and a daughter by her second husband, a recently deceased drysalter of renown. There was one other person whose length of stay at the *Ultramarine* seemed to give him a claim to make up the triumvirate—Mr. Thomas Aird, a retired Indian official, who, with his little son, aged seven, had resided at the hotel since the spring. Besides these, there were several others with whom we shall make acquaintance in the course of this story; but those I have mentioned were the governing body. The rest seldom ventured, in Mrs. Armytage's presence, to express an opinion; or if they did, as Mr. Aird simply but forcibly expressed it, 'they had their noses snapped off pretty sharp.'

The social government of the place was, in short, a privy council composed of all the hotel guests, but only the prime minister and one or two other politicians (who secretly caballed against her, and were always in opposition) were allowed to have a voice in the direction of affairs. The *table-d'hôte* was a sort of Bed of Justice, over which, but in full dress, Mrs. Armytage presided, and laid down the law with a silver fork like Britannia with her trident. She always took the head of the table opposite the last comer (male), because she said the occupation of that position by a lady made the whole thing more like home. She forgot to add that it made it more like *her* home, with herself for its recognised mistress.

The dining-room was the old banqueting hall of the abbot's house, and terminated in a deep bay window in which Mrs. Armytage sat enthroned at the *table-d'hôte*, and by a turn of her head to either side could command an extensive view, which, moreover, comprised the approach to the hotel; and, without any reflection on that lady's taste for the picturesque, we may say that the arrivals and departures in connection with the *Ultramarine* interested her quite as much as landscape. The dinner hour was six—an unfashionably early time which had been fixed upon, in opposition to Mrs. Armytage's wishes, to suit Mr. Aird's little Davey, from whom he was inseparable, and who always sat at his left hand at meals. She was wont to say that it was enough to spoil *any* child (with a stress upon the 'any' which implied that Davey was spoiled already) to be sitting up with grown-up people at such an hour. But little Davey was very popular, and his cause had been advocated by so large a majority of the cabinet that the prime minister had had to give way upon that point. Mrs. Jennynge was not, perhaps, a more ardent lover of children

than herself, but she found this little peg very convenient to hang her opposition flag upon. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace, too—the homely old couple from Devonshire, whose existence at the council board Mrs. Armytage barely acknowledged—had for once raised their voices to the same effect; while Mr. Aird had bluntly said that if the dinner hour was made later he would rather dine with the child in his own private sitting-room, and sacrifice the charms of Mrs. Armytage's society altogether.

Upon the afternoon on which our story opens the hotel company were seated as usual at the festive board, each, or each set, with their characteristic drinks before them. Mr. and Mrs. Armytage had their bottle of champagne, of which the latter, it was rather ill-naturedly said, got the lion's share; whereas, as the lady had explained again and again, she had been recommended 'constant support,' and only took it in that effervescent form by the doctor's orders; while her husband, the Professor, had been limited by the same authority to two or three glasses at most, on account of the morbid activity of his brain. With the exception of his brain, however, that gentleman was somewhat inert, his only exercise (he was an entomologist) being butterfly-catching, or rather the pursuit of that attractive insect, which he followed with a little green gauze net with greater perseverance than success. Mrs. and Miss Jennynge had a modest pint of Sauterne between them—all, as the former had once remarked, they ever took in the way of stimulant, of which, in her opinion (with a side glance at the champagne bottle), a lady could hardly take too little. We say *once* remarked, because Mrs. Armytage's rejoinder, 'You are not afraid of *your* brain, Mrs. Jennynge, surely,' was so very prompt and curt that it was not likely that the observation would be repeated.

Mr. and Mrs. Wallace drank cider; some said because it looked like champagne and might deceive the public, but in reality because they were used to it at home. Their two next neighbours were Mr. Felspar, the landscape painter, and his friend, Mr. Vernon, both lodging at Mrs. Gammer's in the village, and only occasional guests at the *table-d'hôte*. The artist was a man of thirty: but he looked younger than his years, from the circumstance of his having a delicate complexion and wearing neither beard nor whisker. This deficiency, however, was fully compensated for by the hair of his head, which, though worn long and in profusion, had always the appearance of being blown back by the wind, and caused him, combined with his eager eyes and fair complexion, to resemble a good angel on a gargoye. His companion was some years his junior, and, if not so angelic, better looking. His features were delicate and of olive hue, with which the bright black moustache upon his lip contrasted very becomingly. These two young gentlemen had some ordinary claret before them, for which Mrs. Trant knew better than to charge them any extraordinary price. Mr. Aird had a bottle of Madeira, though it

was a wine that was understood to be much at variance with his already debilitated liver; while little Davey had a pint all to himself of what he firmly believed to be a rare and ancient vintage, but which in reality consisted of currant wine and water. He sipped it like a connoisseur, with his little golden head on one side, and one blue eye closed like a blonde raven, exactly as he had seen his father do. His napkin tucked under his chin to save his summer raiment from stain gave him the air of a gourmand, though he had the good sense (acting upon instructions beforehand, and not submitting, it was to be understood, to dictation before folks) to reject such dishes as were unwholesome. He had once admitted in a moment of confidence that he 'loved his little stomach' (by which he intended, upon the principle, perhaps, that the greater includes the less, to indicate the things which he put into it); but, for all his grown-up ways and manners, he was essentially childlike. Upon the present occasion, for example, on the sound of wheel and hoof being heard without, the pleasures of the table sank into insignificance with him. The modicum of fish he was about to convey to his mouth was replaced quickly upon his plate, and in a moment he had stepped quietly down from his high chair, and, drawn by an irrepressible curiosity, had taken his station in the bay window.

'If I had a boy like that,' observed Mrs. Armytage, with serene severity, 'I'd——'

'You never will,' put in Mr. Aird, with confidence.

'Never will what, sir?' inquired the lady, with indignation, and a look of appeal towards her husband.

But the Professor, never moved to wrath unless his theory of the *Lepidoptera* was questioned, and deep in the dissection of a whiting, never so much as raised his head.

'I only meant,' explained Mr. Aird, repenting of his burst of temper, which in the case of any affront offered to his offspring he could never restrain, 'I only meant that there never could be another child like Davey.'

'One would hope not, if he is to behave like that,' retorted the lady; 'though it is not to be expected, when children of seven years old are allowed to dine late with their seniors, that anything like discipline——'

'There are *four* horses,' cried little Davey from the window, from which he was prospecting down the road, like another Sister Anne, in total unconsciousness of being a *casus belli*; 'a carriage and four, papa; pray come and look!'

'*Four* horses!' exclaimed Mrs. Armytage, in the excitement of the moment forgetting her own canons of etiquette, and rising from her chair to better reconnoitre the approaching vehicle.

'*Four* horses!' murmured Mrs. Wallace, from her side of the table, from which a view was to be obtained. 'I don't know that I ever saw a carriage and four horses in my life.'

'Did you never see a coach, lass?' inquired her husband; and pursued his repast with philosophic calm.

'Four horses!' murmured Mrs. Jennynge. 'Who can it be? What do you think, Professor?'

'I, madam?' returned that gentleman, withdrawing his mind from scientific reflection and the whiting to grasp the problem thus unexpectedly presented to his notice. 'If it is anything with four horses, it is most probably a hearse.'

'Is it not extraordinary,' whispered Vernon to Felspar, 'how two extra post-horses can thus interest the female mind?'

'It is not *that*,' returned his friend; 'for if there were eight horses instead of four, it would proclaim a travelling caravan, which would not interest them at all. It is the suggestion of wealth conveyed in the number four (in harness) which makes it as significant as the number seven in magic.'

'Small things agitate small minds,' observed Vernon didactically.

'Oh, papa! Oh, Mr. Vernon!' exclaimed little Davey, 'there is such a bootiful young lady in the carriage!'

The Professor wiped his mouth and turned round in his chair, while Vernon hurriedly left his seat and joined the child in the bay window, do doubt with the intention of administering admonition and reproof. 'My dear Davey,' he said, 'it is very wrong to stare at strangers;' but at the same time he glanced at the new arrival on his own account.

He had seen a good many pretty faces in his time, both in real life and in his friend Felspar's portfolio, who had a talent for drawing them; but neither nature nor art had hitherto shown him one so fair as that which was now presented to him. His glance became permanent; in spite of himself he could not withdraw his eyes.

'It appears to me, Mr. Vernon,' said Mrs. Armytage, severely, 'that you are falling into the same error for which you have just reproved that child. Your profession'—and being that of letters, she entertained for it a very proper contempt—'gives you a great choice of epithets, which, I am told, you are not slow to apply to others. What would you call *me* if I was to stand and stare at every new comer like that?'

'Beautiful!' murmured the unconscious Vernon. 'Most beautiful, and modesty itself.'

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE LADIES' DRAWING-ROOM.

WHO has not experienced, after a brief sojourn, it may be of a few weeks or even days, in a strange scene and among new people, a certain sense of the division of existence; a feeling that one's life has been distributed into two parts, one of



which, lasting for it may be about half a century, we have got married in, begotten children, made our fortune or lost it, and in short played the usual parts in the human life drama; while the other half we seem to have spent at Muddleton-on-Sea, where we arrived a fortnight ago or so and are still resident! The Present is so real and actual when contrasted with the Past, its impressions are so much more vivid than the strongest efforts of memory, that time and events count almost for nothing in the comparison. And though a day will come, perhaps, when Muddleton itself will be so utterly effaced from our recollection that we may doubt whether it was we ourselves who visited it, or a friend who described it to us, for the nonce it reigns supreme, and we are Muddletonians.

And thus it was with the guests at the *Ultramarine* at Wallington Bay. The hotel, where they had all been staying for some time, with an intention to prolong their visit, had become a second home to them, and, for the nonce, Wallington was their world. The events that occurred in it were insignificant enough, but circumstances had invested them with importance. What these good people did was little; but since it was all they had to do, it monopolised their attention. Limited as was the sphere of their existence, there was room in it for intrigues, jealousies, and all human passions. A bijou theatre suffices as well as a San Carlo for the representation of the drama of life. The *table-d'hôte* alone displayed a multiplicity of phases of character; here every one met on common ground, and, though one had the supremacy, her sway, as we have seen, was not undisputed. Rebellion reared its impious head in the form of Mr. Aird, and insubordination showed itself, though less audaciously, in that of Mr. Vernon.

In the ladies' drawing-room, on the other hand, to which the fair sex generally repaired after the chief meal of the day, Mrs. Armytage reigned supreme; the impatience of authority occasionally manifested by Mrs. and Miss Jennynge was there subdued by terror. On the day on which our story opens, however, there was no room for antagonism in the minds of the occupants of this apartment; they were occupied, to the exclusion of all lower passions, by the enthralling topic of the new arrivals. It is true that, for the moment, the master spirit was absent, as, on the conclusion of the *table-d'hôte*, Mrs. Armytage had gone straight to Mrs. Trant's parlour in order to glean from her all the particulars of which she might be possessed concerning the occupants of the barouche and four. Mrs. and Miss Jennynge, Mrs. Wallace, and some other ladies, including Mrs. Percival-Lott—an attractive-looking young person, suspected of being a bride, but who rarely opened her lips except to her husband, and even then apparently only to show her teeth—were awaiting her return with eager curiosity. The arm-chair which Mrs. Armytage usually occupied was vacant; it was beyond Mrs. Jennynge's courage to take possession of it, but in the interregnum she had assumed the airs of sovereignty, and was dispensing patronage.



'From my position at the *table-d'hôte*,' she said, 'I was unable to catch sight of these strangers; nor did I think it *comme il faut*' (Mrs. Jennynge had a great command of French phrases, though in her daughter's presence she was a little shy of exhibiting that gift; she would look at her, after indulging in them, with rather an apprehensive air in case anything might have gone wrong with her accent or their application)—'I say I did not think it *en règle* to turn round in my chair, and stare as one of us did who shall be nameless; but you, Mrs. Wallace, were on the other side of the table and could command a view of them. Do tell us honestly what they were like.'

To do Mrs. Wallace justice, the adjuration was scarcely necessary; if she could not have told her story honestly, it is certain she could not have told it at all. She had not the faculty of 'making the thing that is not as the thing that is;' and, moreover, being old-fashioned, and having been brought up in the country, would have thought it wrong to do so. She was a farmer's daughter and a farmer's wife, and had come from her Devon home to Wallington Bay to recover from the effects of a domestic calamity. She never intended to offer opposition to anybody, but, through simplicity, she very often did it.

'Well, ma'am, I had only a glimmer of them from where I sat myself,' she replied; 'but the gentleman looked a real gentleman, though sickly, and his daughter—for I am sure they are father and daughter—seemed a very sweet creature.'

'Any style?' inquired Miss Jennynge, languidly. She was a tall wasp of a girl, with dark hair worn à l'*Impératrice* sufficient for ten girls; her gown was so tight at the knees that you expected them to come through, and a little train jerked behind her as she walked, as though an invisible dog was hanging on to her ankle.

'Style!' echoed Mrs. Wallace, simply; the word recalled for a moment 'the simple stile from mead to mead' about her Devon home; the next instant she would have understood readily enough what was meant, but, unfortunately, the requisite time was not allowed her.

'My daughter means was the girl *chic-chic*,' observed Mrs. Jennynge, condescending to explain, but with some impatience of manner.

Poor Mrs. Wallace was more puzzled than ever; she had got out of the fields only to find herself in a poultry yard.

'Oh, yes; she was quite young,' observed the good lady, confidently.

'I can answer your question, Miss Jennynge,' interposed the suspected bride. 'I could see enough of the young lady to remark that she was far from distinguished looking; indeed, some people would call her dowdy.'

'Your husband told me he thought her pretty,' observed Miss Jennynge, maliciously.

Here Mrs. Percival-Lott began to show her teeth to some purpose, and would probably have 'said things' had not Mrs. Armytage entered at that moment, bearing in her arms—instead of her pug dog, as usual—an enormous book.

'Oh, my dears!' she exclaimed excitedly, 'what *do* you think?'

That Mrs. Armytage should have described the company as 'my dears' was inexplicable; but there are moments in human life when the barriers of social prejudice are broken down, and the heart claims the right to speak. 'I have found it all out! Here is his name in black and white;' and she touched the volume she had just placed on the table with impressive reverence. 'The name of the gentleman is Josceline, and he is an Honourable.'

'You don't say so!' ejaculated Mrs. Jennynge.

'Well, I never!' cried Mrs. Wallace, not intending to convey a vulgar astonishment, but only the simple fact that she had never happened to have seen an Honourable before.

Mrs. Armytage regarded her for a moment with withering scorn, and then opened the sacred volume.

'This,' she said, 'is the Peerage. It is an old edition; but that is of small consequence, as one does not care for late creations.'

'Of course not,' said Mrs. Jennynge with magnificent contempt, as though she was speaking of early dinners.

'The word Josceline,' resumed Mrs. Armytage, who only needed a glass of water to complete her resemblance to a public lecturer, 'appears more than once in these pages; but the point of difference is the *s*. The Roden family, for example, spell their name with a *c* only.' This information was hailed with quite a burst of satisfaction from all the ladies, including even Mrs. Wallace; she did not quite comprehend what the lecture was about, but she thought it must be very convenient to any family to spell their name with a single letter.

'The gentleman of whom we are speaking—and who is now staying at this hotel—is a cadet of the house of Boroughby; the title of the eldest son is Lord St. Stephens.'

She paused to allow these mighty names to have their full significance, and also to mark their effect. She enjoyed the supremacy of the situation exceedingly, and, to use a very inappropriate (because common) expression, smacked her lips over it.

'Dear me!' exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge, settling the strings of her lace cap with nervous fingers; 'pray go on.'

'Here is the record,' continued Mrs. Armytage, alluding to the volume with the same solemnity that a Jewish Rabbi might treat the tables of the law. 'Boroughby, Earl of; George—evidently a family name, as you will see—George Francis Camperdown, Earl of Boroughby, Viscount St. Stephens; also

Baron Pollem, in the peerage of Ireland; Lord Lieutenant of Loamshire; commandant of Loamshire Yeomanry. Married Lady Theresa Augusta Fitzmarmalade, daughter of the Earl of Jellybag, K.P., and has issue'—concluded Mrs. Armytage triumphantly, as though, in the case of a couple so distinguished, such an event was almost more than could be looked for—'Catherine Dorothea, Charles Frederick Viscount St. Stephens, Henrietta Maria Georgina, and—here we have him—George Emilius Josceline; he was forty-nine last September.'

'Dearie me!' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace with unfeigned astonishment; how in the world did you find that out?'

'If you had ever *seen* a Peerage,' returned Mrs. Armytage, pitifully, like a shocked missionary addressing the heathen, 'you would know that the date of birth of every member of the aristocracy is inscribed in its pages.'

'That must be rather hard upon the ladies,' observed Mrs. Wallace, who, though impervious to satire, had a touch of simple drollery about her. Unhappily, in looking round for approbation of this stroke of humour, her eye fell upon Miss Jennynge. That that young lady would have liked to have had her name in the Peerage was certain, yet that revelation as to age would in her case have been a serious drawback. She was standing not on the brink of the rivulet 'where womanhood and childhood meet,' but much lower down the river, and she took poor Mrs. Wallace's observation as a personal one.

'All jokes are vulgar,' she observed; 'but especially jokes upon a serious subject.'

'La, Miss Jennynge, the Peerage ain't the Bible!' pleaded Mrs. Wallace. The other ladies pursed their lips and shook their heads; in principle they felt they were right, though in this particular case their antagonist might have the advantage of them.

'I am afraid you are a special pleader,' sighed Mrs. Armytage; and all the other ladies sighed in sympathy like Æolian harps. 'The question is,' she resumed with the air of one who dismisses trifles for an important subject, 'shall we have Mr. and Miss Josceline at the *table-d'hôte*?'

'Why, dear me, how could we keep 'em out of it?' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace.

'Keep them out!' echoed Mrs. Armytage, elevating her jewelled fingers; 'what extraordinary observations, Mrs. Wallace, you are making this evening! Who would dream—unless to be sure,' she added, significantly, 'one was an atheist or a democrat—of keeping them out? What I meant to inquire was whether they would join the general table.'

'To-night at all events, since the young lady will be tired,' remarked Mrs. Jennynge, 'she is almost sure to have a *dîner à part*.'

'That, I think, may be taken for granted,' observed Mrs. Wallace. 'She is sure to dine with her Pa at all events.'

Miss Jennynge laughed and threw her head up—it was one of those few portions of her frame which her mode of dress left at her own disposal—in impatience and disdain, like a high-mettled horse.

‘What have I said now,’ thought poor Mrs. Wallace, ‘to make that girl so angry? My belief is that the strain upon her knees affects her temper.’

‘I think,’ said Mrs. Armytage, thoughtfully, ‘that it would be only civil—and—polite—especially as the young lady has no female companion—if one of us, as the representative of the rest, should leave her card upon the new arrivals. They have taken number fourteen sitting-room on the first floor.’

‘By all means let us leave our cards,’ said Mrs. Jennynge, eagerly; it would be only as you say—I don’t mean *à propos*; what is the word, Julia?’

Julia shrugged her shoulders, and in so doing escaped so completely from her clothes that it was fortunate no gentleman, as sometimes happened, chanced to have joined the drawing-room party.

‘I’m sure I don’t know what you mean, Mrs. Jennynge,’ rejoined Mrs. Armytage, sharply. ‘The idea of our all leaving our cards! Why, it would be like a round robin, which is only used when one wants to complain of something. My proposal was that one of us should act as the representative of the rest.’

If the Earl of Boroughby had addressed his tenants in the same words, with Lord St. Stephens on his right hand as a candidate for a seat in Parliament, it could not have been more obvious to whom he referred than that on the present occasion Mrs. Armytage was referring to herself; nor was the result more doubtful. But, though defeated, Mrs. Jennynge had a kick in her yet. ‘In that case,’ she observed, ‘I think we had better select the oldest of us.’

‘I beg you won’t,’ observed Mrs. Wallace, with a pretence of apprehension; ‘for, though Mrs. Armytage may run me very near, I believe as to years that I have the advantage of her.’

As Mrs. Wallace openly proclaimed herself to be sixty, and playfully likened herself to a withered apple (which, indeed, she greatly resembled), the humility of this speech did not go far to make it palatable to the person to whom it referred.

‘As the lady who has been longest *in the house*,’ answered Mrs. Armytage, emphatically, with a glance of scorn at Mrs. Jennynge, ‘and waiving any other claim such as might be derived from social position or otherwise, I accept the task which has thus unanimously been entrusted to me. I will call upon the Honourable George Emilius Josceline and his daughter to-morrow afternoon,’



## CHAPTER IV.

## A VISITOR.

THE attendance at the public breakfast table next morning at the *Ultramarine* was more punctual than usual. Every one was on the *qui vive*, as Mrs. Jennynge expressed it, to see the new-comers, the tidings of whose rank and importance had spread far and wide. Whenever the door opened everyone looked up with expectation, except the suspected bride and bridegroom. Mr. Percival-Lott kept his eyes fixed on his plate, and Mrs. Percival-Lott kept her eyes riveted on him. When all were seated, and the next arrival was bound to be the expected pair, quite a murmur of discontent went round the table when, instead of them, Mr. Walter Vernon presented himself.

'And to what are we indebted for *your* presence this morning?' inquired Mrs. Armytage, with a bitterness which, for once, the company thought not uncalled for.

'I am come, madam,' said Vernon—with a hasty glance around him, which, curiously enough, reflected the general disappointment—'for breakfast. Felspar has gone out to paint some "early effects," and, being averse to a solitary meal, I have ventured to intrude my presence upon you.'

'Very prettily expressed, I am sure,' growled Mr. Aird, who was always cynical and cantankerous until midday, and sometimes later.

'Come and sit by me, Mr. Vernon,' cried little Davey, 'and then you can see the pretty lady;' and he pointed with his small finger to the two vacant chairs on the opposite side of the table.

Mr. Vernon had been at a public school and at college, and had also moved in good society, but he blushed to the roots of his hair, and took his seat without a word.

'By Jingo!' murmured Mr. Percival-Lott, just preserving himself from bursting into a roar of laughter by an application of muffin.

'I see nothing to laugh at in the child's remark,' answered his youthful spouse, severely; 'his forwardness is simply disgusting.'

'Very much so; I deplore it,' answered her husband, hurriedly. He was a blonde gentleman with a fluffy moustache, and with that sort of complexion which exhibits on the least provocation the innermost emotions of the soul. He felt all the delight which a young man naturally experiences at the discomfiture of a contemporary of his own sex, and was not, perhaps, displeased that his views of the charms of Miss Josceline (which had been much depreciated by Mrs. Lott) should be thus corroborated by an independent opinion.

'What an *enfant terrible* that is!' whispered Mrs. Jennynge to her neighbour, Mrs. Wallace, 'and also what an *enfant gâté*!'

'He is all that, no doubt, ma'am,' answered that lady, admiringly. 'I always prefer children's talk to that of grown-up people, because it is so truthful. What a funny little trot he is!'

As the meal went on without sign of the new comers, Mrs. Armytage beckoned to one of the neat-handed Phyllises who, at the *Ultramarine*, performed to admiration the duties discharged elsewhere by greasy waiters, and asked her some question in a whisper. At the reply she raised her eyebrows and her eyeglasses, and thus addressed the company:—

'You will be sorry to hear, ladies and gentlemen, that there will be no addition to our party this morning, and still more for the cause. The Honourable Mr. Josceline is indisposed.'

'Nothing catching, I hope?' inquired Mr. Aird, with an anxious look at the child beside him.

'Catching!' echoed Mrs. Armytage, contemptuously, as though, in connection with a person so distinguished, such a supposition could only have occurred to a very vulgar nature. 'Esther tells me that she heard a word dropped about palpitation. There is always something interesting to my mind in any matter connected with the heart.'

'Yes, yes; an *affaire de cœur*,' assented Mrs. Jennynge; 'all sorts of charming things have been written about it.'

'Lots of things have been written about the liver, too,' grumbled Mr. Aird, with the air of one who had read them; 'and none of them worth twopence.'

'Well; whatever we may have thought of the matter last night,' observed Mrs. Armytage, rising from the breakfast table, 'it is now quite certain that my call upon Miss Josceline is indispensable. As ladies and Christians, since her noble father is prostrated on a bed of sickness, we cannot do less than offer her our condolence.'

'One moment,' pleaded Mr. Aird; and Mrs. Armytage, having sailed down the *salle-à-manger* in her stately fashion, delayed for one moment at the threshold. 'If it's palpitations, you may take my word for it there is nothing like peppermint drops—you can get them at Mudge's emporium for threepence an ounce.'

If Mrs. Armytage had had the patience, she would have learned from her informant how to obtain them even cheaper by purchasing a quantity, but she flounced out of the room in a huff. As respected Mr. Josceline, she was secretly not displeased that he should be afflicted with a slight indisposition; it would tend, as she imagined, to throw him and his daughter into her own hands, and to isolate him from the rest of the hotel company. On the other hand, she hoped he would not be ill enough to cause Dr. Cooper to be sent for—a person altogether unworthy of such patronage, and who, when consulted as a friend about her Fido's illness—when it seemed that the little darling was about to be

taken from her—had thus delivered his professional opinion: ‘The brute is overfed, ma’am; as to his looking black under the eyes, pugs generally do; make him walk, and dock his vittles.’

It was her duty now to prepare Fido’s breakfast—a simple farinaceous meal composed of biscuits, cream, and sugar—and then to hold a medical consultation with her maid respecting Philomel, her pet canary, one of whose feathers had been discovered at the bottom of his cage.

‘If the sweet creature is not moulting, Jane, what can be the alternative?’ was her agonised inquiry.

‘Perhaps, ma’am,’ replied the maid, at her wits’ end, ‘the cat have got at it’—a suggestion that increased the apprehension of her mistress twenty-fold.

It is in such cases as these that natures given up to frivolity and idleness succumb to their fears and their regrets. That of Mrs. Armytage, however, was supported by a strong sense of social duty; and knowing that there were but a few hours before her, including the period allotted to lunch, she at once began to occupy herself in preparations in connection with her toilette, for the interview with the distinguished invalid.

When she said that the Joscelines had taken a first-floor apartment, she might have added, had she known it, that it was the best in the house; but it was a part of Mrs. Trant’s calling, and one that helped to place her so deservedly high in it, to persuade every guest that he or she had secured the best sitting-room in the hotel, whereas the best was, if possible, always kept vacant in case of some tremendous contingency, such as the sudden arrival of a person of great consequence, which had now occurred.

The apartment in question had three windows commanding a noble view of land and sea, and was furnished, though not expensively, in a much more liberal manner than is usual with hotel sitting-rooms. It had easy chairs without a broken spring in the middle of them to suggest activity instead of ease; sofas from which the human body could be kept from sliding without continual support; and little tables that did not ‘tip’ on touch as though they were under the patronage of spirits. On one of the tables was a vase of fresh flowers—an attention always paid by Mrs. Trant to new comers; and even a few books, including a county directory, some ‘Contributions to the History of the Dane-cliff’ (a pamphlet by the Vicar of Barton), and an old volume of the ‘Mirror’ for 1816.

Mr. Josceline, however, was independent of these literary attentions, since he never travelled without his own library, consisting of a pocket volume of Horace. He was reading it now, or rather dipping into it as one does dip into Horace, ever and anon looking out through the open window from his easy chair, in reflection, I think, on some text from his favourite author, rather than entranced with the sights and sounds of nature. He was what Mrs. Jennyng would have termed *en déshabillé*: in a silk



dressings-gown and with a little smoking cap which he in reality wore to conceal a slight baldness, and for which he found excuse in cigarettes. He was looking languid and pale, but less ill than bored. It was clear that the charms of Wallington Bay had made very little impression on him; the expression of his face was apathetic, except when it was turned towards his daughter; then, if he caught her eye, he smiled; if otherwise, the apathy would give way to perplexity and occasionally to gloom.

Ella had been making cigarettes for him with a little machine she had brought from Paris; but, having completed as many as she thought he would require for the day, she had taken up some work of her own with which she was busying herself in silence. She had learnt never to be the first to commence conversation when alone with her father.

‘What is that you are toiling at, Ella?’ he inquired, presently; ‘it looks to me like a bonnet.’

‘My dear papa, I hope it will look like that to every one,’ she answered, cheerfully, ‘because it’s meant for a bonnet.’

‘But I thought you bought a bonnet at Madame Cheris’s?’

‘So I did, papa; but a young lady does not wear a bonnet, as a man wears his hat, till it wears out.’

‘But I never made a hat in my life, Ella, and why should you make your own bonnets?’

‘My dear papa, you don’t understand the position. Nothing is so terrible, you must know, as for a girl to be seen every day in the same bonnet. This is one of the great things we look to, we women, in one another: “Is that the same bonnet she wore yesterday, or last week, or last summer?” we say to ourselves; “and is that a new dress, or is it turned or dyed?” Now, nobody but a millionaire could afford to get two bonnets at Madame Cheris’s; so I buy one and take it for a pattern; then, like Prometheus with his spark from heaven, I make a bonnet for myself.’

It was evident that her father was amused by her gaiety, and even flattered by it, for, strange to say, it was inherited. There had been a time—alas, how long ago!—when he, too, had been light-hearted and witty. The wit remained in a certain crystallised form, and occasionally was even ‘happy;’ but the gaiety of heart had departed.

‘But, my dear Ella, suppose any one should come in and find my daughter making bonnets?’

‘Then you, dear papa, would have to put your daughter on the sofa—for of course she would be in a dead faint—remove the pillow, and burn feathers under her nose till she comes to.’

She spoke thus very playfully, but with a certain earnestness also, as though arguing against something unexpressed.

‘And how much do you save by this operation in bonnets?’ he inquired, gravely.

‘Madame Cheris charges eight pounds; my materials cost me,

perhaps, two, and my time is valueless. I save, therefore, six pounds. If I had a pencil I could make sure of it, but I think that is seventy-five per cent.'

'Your facts are indisputable, Ella. Nevertheless, remember what I told you about the four posters. There is such a thing as false economy. For the future, when you have a bonnet to make, oblige me, at all events, by making it in your own room.'

'I will take it up at once, dear papa,' said Ella, cheerfully. 'And I will bring down your medicine with me; it is time for you to take it.'

Mr. Josceline glanced after her, as she left the room, with a yearning look, which was, however, but momentary. 'The girl is an angel,' he muttered; 'but, unhappily, one is not in heaven.'

His eyes fell once more on his book, but this time he seemed to find no pleasure in its perusal. His brow contracted, and his thin white fingers also, and twice and again he struck his clenched hand against his knee. It was not of Horace he was thinking then, but of his own irrevocable past. There was a home spirit at his right hand, but he had no home to offer her—the time was over for that; but, for the moment, the reflection that it was so, spread gloom upon his soul. It so changed his face that Ella noticed it as she entered the room.

'Are you not feeling so well, papa? I do trust you will dine alone with me to-day, and not venture upon the excitement of the *table-d'hôte*.'

'Yes; if the people are like the place,' he said, with his usual quiet cynicism, 'it will, indeed, be a vortex of gaiety. Still, I shall risk it.'

'Not to-day, papa,' she pleaded; 'you are more of an invalid, I fear, than you imagine.'

He shook his head and murmured to himself, 'There is, therefore, the less time to lose;' then added aloud, 'It will do me good; change always does.'

If it was so, Mr. Josceline ought to have been in very robust health; for he had been a rolling stone, which, if it had gathered no moss, had rolled on it. Leisure and ease had been his own for many a year; his only experience of want had been on one occasion (which he had never forgotten), when his champagne had been served for him in some place in the provinces without ice, owing to the total absence of that commodity. The incident ranked in his mind with such examples of barbarism as are recorded of Patagonia, and in the tales of destitution that are narrated concerning shipwrecks. 'If you will believe me,' he would say with feeling, 'there was not a pound of rough ice, far less of Wenham, in the whole town!'

He had never had any large command of money, but, with the exception of a small sum allotted to Ella's schooling and maintenance, he had scrupulously spent what he had upon his own pleasures; his income would have been amply sufficient for him—

self and her little needs, now that she was grown up, and had become his companion in their life's journey, but, unfortunately, it died with him. With this fact (for which he had himself to blame) his conscience reproached him not bitterly (for, as we have said, it was a very gentlemanly conscience), but perceptibly; it filled him with an anxiety he would not, perhaps, otherwise have experienced to get his daughter settled in life. His experience, manners, and even tastes, he estimated as so many investments in her favour. He had had to pay for them pretty handsomely; but, if they procured her a good position, she would have little, he persuaded himself, to complain of on the score of his having squandered the hard cash. Until he knew her—that is, until some six months ago—he had felt, from circumstances which will be explained hereafter, but little remorse; but he had learnt to love the girl as he had never loved any one before (always excepting George Emilius Josceline), and to feel, though without openly admitting them, the obligations of a parent.

As one who knows argument to be useless, Ella uttered a little sigh, and having administered the medicine to her father very carefully—for it was a most powerful drug—took out some drawing materials, and, seating herself at the window, began to sketch.

Mr. Josceline, still affecting to be deep in Horace, watched her furtively from under the hand he put up to screen himself from the sun; glare was obnoxious to him, as were all loud sounds and powerful odours; an organ in the street gave him acute pain, and if a wallflower chanced to be in the room with him, it turned him faint. Yet by nature he was by no means effeminate; as a young man he had been a bold rider and no despicable opponent with the gloves, and as a fencer he had had no rival at the university; but in the process of destroying his constitution he had developed 'nerves.' The least thing unstrung him, and, but for his solicitude for his reputation for good manners, or in other words, for a certain superfluous calm, he would have become a prey to irritability.

'You have a set of very busy fingers, Ella,' he presently said. 'Even to look at them puts me in a fidget.'

'Shall I read to you, dear papa? I am afraid I cannot manage Horace, but I'll try.'

'No, thank you, my dear,' said the invalid, precipitately; 'in my present state of health a false quantity would be worse than a double dose of that stuff,' pointing to the medicine with a gesture of disgust. 'Why are you putting away your pencils?'

'I thought my drawing worried you; Dr. Dufaure said you were to be kept free from all annoyances.'

'That is, unhappily, a prescription that cannot easily be made up,' sighed Mr. Josceline. 'Pray go on with your amusement. There can be no harm in it unless you flatter yourself it is work.'

'Well, papa, it is work to me; that is to say, it is the one

thing which, when I have done well, I feel satisfied with myself about.'

'You think you are a great artist, do you?'

'Dear papa, oh no! On the contrary, I feel I am only on the threshold of art, not even across it. I only meant that when I have done a careful piece of drawing, it seems to me that I have not been idling away my time.'

'How so? What's the good of it, more, I don't say than a tune on the piano, because the drawing remains and the sound vanishes, but more than a bit of lacework, for example? Do you propose to make your living by it?' he added suddenly.

Ella crimsoned from brow to chin, but remained silent.

'Now, my dear child, pray do not give way to illusions. For a young lady of your condition and advantages to take up drawing as a profession is what mechanics call a waste of power. You might just as well take up clear-starching. I have not the slightest objection to your pursuing it as an amusement, mind, or even to your pursuing it with the aid of masters, but what I fear is that this occupation may lead your mind into a wrong direction, and perhaps yourself with it.'

'I do not quite follow you, papa,' said Ella, tremulously.

'You follow me quite sufficiently, my dear; you are one of those to whom a hint is as significant as a sermon, and I never preach sermons, you know.'

'No, indeed, papa,' she interrupted with tender gravity; 'I don't think you ever could.'

Here a very curious circumstance happened, and one which to Ella (notwithstanding the compliment just paid to her intelligence) was wholly inexplicable. The blood rushed into her father's cheeks, and his eyes sought the ground with an unmistakable look of discomfort and annoyance; the instant afterwards he fixed them on her face with a look of sharp suspicion. They read nothing there but a surprised solicitude, and a desire to please him at all hazards, that was never absent from it.

'You are a good girl, and will, I know, obey my wishes,' he said gently. 'Let me see your drawing.'

She put it into his hand with a smile that would have disarmed any critic of the male sex.

'It is very nicely done,' he said; 'but there are five hundred girls, in art schools and elsewhere, who could have done it better.'

'I am quite sure of that, papa,' she answered confidently.

'And not ten of them, my dear, will ever make a hundred pounds a year by such a calling. You have no idea,' he added, smiling, 'what a much prettier picture you make yourself.'

She rose, and, with exquisite grace which yet contrived to include a touch of humour, made him an elaborate courtesy. There were many prettier girls in the world than Ella Josceline, but very few had such a charm of manner. This is well understood in society to be worth cultivation; but, unhappily, models



are scarce. Of the drawling girl, and the gushing girl, and the would-be meretricious or fast girl, we have many specimens ; but the girl that ventures to be natural is seldom found. Ella had this rare courage, and, to those who could read nature, it was irresistible.

It was possible that her father might have paid her another compliment, for he was very pleased, and also willing to improve the occasion ; but at this moment there was a knock at the door, and Phoebe, the neat-handed, entered.

‘If you please, Miss, Mrs. Armytage’s compliments, and might she be permitted to make a call upon you?’

‘Mrs. Armytage? I do not know the lady; there must be some mistake,’ said Ella.

‘It is about a subscription for the Tonga Missionary Fund, or the Floating Church for Sailors,’ murmured Mr. Josceline. ‘Tell her I’m ill.’

‘Oh, sir, please sir, she knows *that*!’ said Phoebe, overhearing the last word. ‘It is on that very account, she says, that she hopes you will see her. She thinks she has something that will do you good.’

‘That must be tracts,’ muttered the invalid. ‘Tell her, my good girl, that we will read anything she will be so good as to send us; but that I regret exceedingly that my health will not permit of a personal interview.’

‘La, bless ye, sir! it ain’t reading; it’s a linseed poultice or summut.’

‘Good heavens!’ cried Mr. Josceline, ‘she must be mad. Who is she?’

‘Well, sir, she’s been here the longest in the house, and is a lady very much looked up to.’

Ella was once more about to excuse herself on the ground of her father’s indisposition, when, to her great surprise, he answered for himself:—

‘Say, if the lady does not mind my being in invalid costume, we shall be happy to see her.’

Whereupon, no sooner had the door closed, than, with a celerity that very distinctly conveyed the idea that she had been waiting in the passage, it was reopened by Mrs. Armytage herself.

She entered with a visiting card in her hand, which, after polite salutations made and received, she laid on the table by Mr. Josceline with the air of some highly trained and intelligent animal.

‘In most cases,’ she said, ‘an apology should be made for such a volunteer visit; but I trust that the wife of Timothy Armytage will be acquitted of the charge of intrusion.’

‘She is certainly mad,’ murmured Mr. Josceline to himself; but what he observed aloud and very graciously was, ‘The name of Armytage, madam, is very familiar to me.’



## CHAPTER V.

## THE MAP OF THE COUNTRY.

'I SHOULD in any case,' said Mrs. Armytage, addressing herself in a low tone to Ella, 'have done myself the honour of calling upon you, but the knowledge of your father's indisposition has somewhat precipitated matters. In the event of it being palpitations, and supposing he should have decided upon sending for Dr. Cooper—an excellent person, no doubt, but hardly accustomed to delicate and—ahem!—highly-wrought organisations, I possess a sovereign remedy. I have not brought it with me,' she added, in answer to Ella's look of amazement, 'but the cook is preparing it in a saucepan under my directions.—You have a fine look-out from your window, Mr. Josceline, however unfavourably an hotel apartment may contrast with those to which you have naturally been accustomed.'

'The hotel is an excellent one,' said Mr. Josceline, in the honeyed voice that was more pleasing to strangers than to those that knew him; it often concealed a contempt that suddenly showed itself in biting satire. 'And if it were not so good,' he continued, 'the company to be found in it, to judge by the present specimen'—he indicated Mrs. Armytage herself by a courteous bow—'would more than make up for material shortcomings.'

'You are very kind to say so,' returned his visitor, 'but—if I may make the observation without vanity—perhaps I am scarcely an example of what is popularly called the "common run" of visitors at the *Ultramarine*.'

'Heaven forbid, madam,' ejaculated Mr. Josceline, fervently, 'that I should have imagined that for a single moment.'

'I am among them, but not of them,' resumed Mrs. Armytage, in further explanation. 'My husband's eminence in science—'

'Mr. Toby Armytage,' observed Mr. Josceline, referring, somewhat unsuccessfully, to the card at his elbow.

'Timothy, sir—Professor Timothy Armytage,' returned the lady, with some stress upon the prefix; 'a man of European reputation, and who has given his name to a whole division of the genus *scarabæides*—the beetle family.'

Mr. Josceline, beginning to think that he had heard the name, though erroneously confusing it with some advertisement of a patent insect killer, murmured, 'Of course.'

'I say, possessing a husband so eminent, and tastes of my own which I hope elevate me above the common herd, I can hardly be expected to amalgamate with the society that chance collects within the walls of an hotel.'

'But being an observer of human nature,' said Mr. Josceline, smiling—for he was not only much amused, but saw his way to getting a *carte du pays*—'you know all about them doubtless. Now, my daughter and I being strangers here, I should be very thankful for information upon that point. I need not say whatever you tell us will be in the strictest confidence.'

'Oh, they know what I think of them!' was the frank reply. 'I am one of those who speak plain English. Not like Mrs. Jennynge, whose every other word is French, or what she believes to be such. That her name is Jennings, pure and simple, I have no more doubt than that that's a slipper.'

Mr. Josceline modestly drew the foot to which allusion had thus been made, beneath his dressing-gown, and remarked gently, 'Perhaps she changed it for money?'

'Not she,' returned Mrs. Armytage, disdainfully. 'She didn't get her money that way, bless you. Her husband was something—well, I think, in the cotton line.'

'And the lady herself is a remnant?'

'Now, that's capital!' said Mrs. Armytage, putting up her glasses and regarding her companion with undisguised approval; 'I should not have thought that a person of your position—an Honourable and that—would have known what "a remnant" was. Yes; she's a widow, for the second time, and very rich.'

'May we add without incumbrance?' inquired Mr. Josceline, airily.

'We may not indeed, sir; she has a daughter—such a daughter!' and Mrs. Armytage threw up her hands in a manner which might have expressed anything except approbation. 'Her name is Anastasia, I believe, but her mother calls her "Statty." Gaunt, angular, half dressed, and ill balanced.'

'As to her mind, you mean?'

'No; her heels. They are so high that she leans forward like the Tower of Pisa, and threatens to fall like that of Babel. And she has a tongue like it, too.'

'Like her heels? How curious!'

'No, no; like Babel. She can talk, so her mother says, five languages; *toute accomplie* she calls it—meaning, very accomplished.'

'And has she been long accomplished? I mean is she still young, or a little what her mamma could call *passée*?'

'A good deal *passée*,' said Mrs. Armytage, confidently. 'You'll say so when you see her; and'—here she dropped her voice so that Ella shouldn't hear her—'you'll see a good deal of her. It's shocking, positively shocking, the way she dresses. "Nothing"—as I once ventured to tell her mother—"nothing, my dear madam, but abject poverty can excuse your daughter going about with so little on her." Drawings!' Here the visitor's eye lit upon Ella's sketch. 'Oh, how beautiful, and how like! It is certainly one of those two headlands; is it not, Miss Josceline?'

‘Yes,’ said Ella, amused by this very moderate compliment to her artistic skill; ‘it is the one with the coastguard station on it; but I have not had time to put that in yet.’

‘I see. Rome was not built in a day, was it? Indeed, you’ve only had the morning. Mr. Felspar must see this.’

‘Who is Mr. Felspar?’ inquired Mr. Josceline.

‘Oh, an artist! he lodges in the village, but sometimes comes to dine at the *table-d’hôte*. A very unassuming person indeed, and of considerable talent. He must take your daughter’s portrait; he took mine.’

‘And was it like?’ inquired Mr. Josceline, regarding the original with the most unmistakable interest and admiration.

‘I think it is,’ said Mrs. Armytage, modestly casting down her eyes. ‘The Professor thinks there is something wanting in the expression—a lack of dignity and command.’

‘He would miss that if it wasn’t there,’ observed Mr. Josceline, gravely.

‘Yes; Mr. Felspar has failed to catch the characteristics. He should, as I tell him, confine himself entirely to portrait painting. As it is, he does landscapes also; “a Jack of all trades,” as I ventured to remind him, “is master of none.” But his advice will doubtless be useful to you, Miss Ella—if I caught your name correctly, my dear,’ she added, turning to the young lady.

‘My father calls me Ella,’ said the girl significantly, and with the least tinge of a flush.

‘Just so; it is a very pretty name, probably a family one. Is it not so?’

‘No; it is not, madam!’ returned Mr. Josceline, with a curtness that was almost ferocity. ‘None of my family have ever been so called before, even by their own relatives.’ His manner was at once frost and fire; and the sting of his last sentence would have been felt by most people like the lash of a dogwhip.

Mrs. Armytage, however, was even more mistress of herself than of other people. She would take no offence when not inclined to do so, even though you put it in her hand and doubled her fingers over it.

‘Now, that’s curious,’ she observed, quietly. ‘However, you may have plenty of Ellas among you yet; even the French Louises began somewhere. The names in families always interest me. Now, there’s the Percival-Lotts—bride and bridegroom *we* think, but you will judge for yourself—nothing will ever persuade me that they have any right to that name.’

‘One has heard of Lott before, and also of Lott’s wife,’ observed Mr. Josceline, indifferently. He had by this time recovered his equanimity, but the effects of the storm were still apparent.

‘It is not the Lott, my dear sir, it is the Percival with the hyphen that I object to; he looks to me much more like a Peter.’

‘Permit me to remark, madam, that Peter has some claims to respectability—some persons would even say, to reverence.’

'No doubt; but not to aristocracy—that's the point. She's as close as wax, and very cunning. But I shall find out all about them some day, including the Percival. They try to pass themselves off as an old married couple, but Mrs. Jennynge swears she heard her ask her husband at breakfast whether he took cream and sugar. That's conclusive, you know.'

'True; unless, indeed, the gentleman's tastes were very changeable.'

'Gentlemen's tastes don't change about those sort of things,' observed Mrs. Armytage, with a drop in her voice and a significant contraction in her left eye; 'we know better than that.'

Mr. Josceline bowed in acknowledgment of the confidence thus reposed in him, and also because he could not trust himself to speak; the rapidity with which the lady made her advances tickled his very heartstrings.

'I saw a very nice-looking old couple in the garden this morning,' observed Ella—perceiving the necessity of relieving her father's embarrassment, though ignorant of its cause—'of the name, as I understood, of Wallace.'

'Oh, you mustn't know *them*!' returned Mrs. Armytage, hastily; 'indeed, if you had not mentioned them, I should have ignored their existence. As the Professor would say, they don't move in the same plane with us at all.'

'Dear me!' murmured Mr. Josceline; 'that's very clever of them. Have they an orbit of their own, then?'

'I don't know about that,' said Mrs. Armytage, doubtfully, and rather regretting that she had handled a scientific weapon even in the way of metaphor; 'they have a farm in Devonshire. He is always speaking depreciatingly about the Wallington cows.'

'That looks as if he wanted to buy them,' observed Mr. Josceline.

'Perhaps; that is, I don't think so. They have come to recover themselves from a domestic loss.'

'A cow?'

'No, no; a child. Of course they have a legal right to stay here, but it is very inconsiderate of them; they have not been accustomed to society, and have not the art to conceal it. Mrs. Wallace told me that she had often churned butter with her own hands.'

'That, again, was very clever of her,' observed Mr. Josceline.

'Well, of course she used a machine; but the idea of a lady churning butter!'

'I have done it,' said Ella, simply. 'We had a dairy at our school at Clapham, and we thought it the greatest treat to be allowed to churn.'

'Oh, at Clapham!' answered Mrs. Armytage, shaking her head; 'that's quite another thing.'

'And so I dare say was the butter,' remarked Mr. Josceline.

'Just so,' continued his visitor, approvingly. 'A young lady



may do a thing to amuse herself, such as this drawing for instance; but she would never think of getting any money for it, one hopes.'

'A very just observation, madam,' observed Mr. Josceline.

'I certainly never thought of getting any money for that drawing,' said Ella, good-naturedly; 'and I am afraid no one would ever think of giving it.'

'Of course not,' said Mrs. Armytage; 'that would be too ridiculous. It is only a man like Mr. Aird who does not see that; he says the sole difference between the amateur and the professional is that the work of one is inferior to that of the other. He told me once that a country gentleman was only a glorified game-keeper; whereupon I ventured to remark that such opinions were revolutionary, and that he was an incendiary.'

'And who is Mr. Aird?' inquired Mr. Josceline.

'An old Indian.'

'Heavens? and, apparently, in his war paint.'

'Nay; I mean a retired Indian civilian. He is said to have heaps and heaps of rupees.'

'Indeed! Then I suppose he married a Begum.'

'Very likely; in my opinion he would stick at nothing. He has got rid of her, however, somehow; he is a widower with but one child, and that's a spoilt one.'

'Is he not very delicate?' inquired Ella. 'I noticed a pretty but very fragile-looking boy looking out of the window of the dining-room when we arrived.'

'That's him. Yes; he is fragile enough; no wonder when he dines with grown-up people, and has a bottle of wine all to himself.'

'How shocking!' exclaimed Ella. 'What sort of wine?'

'Oh! I don't know; it puts one out of patience even to look at him; though, of course, it is his father's fault.'

'And how old is this terrible gentleman?' inquired Mr. Josceline, carelessly.

'Seven—though he might be seventy, from his old-fashioned ways.'

'I meant his father.'

'Oh, he?—well; I'm sure I don't know. He looks as brown and withered and (taking his manners into account) as rough as a what-do-you-call-'em?—things you have at dessert—a lychee.'

'Lychees, however, are sweet inside,' observed Ella.

'That's just what Mr. Vernon says: his notion is that ill health makes the man testy, but that he has a kind heart. But there, as I once ventured to tell him, "Perhaps, Mr. Vernon, you want to get some of Mr. Aird's rupees; in which case you will be disappointed, since every single one of them will go to little Davey."'

'That was very frank and like yourself,' observed Mr. Josceline with gentle approval; 'but who is Mr. Vernon?'

'Oh, no one to speak of; a friend of Mr. Felspar, who lodges



in the same house with him; a man of good birth and breeding, but who has thrown all the chances of life away and himself with it. You have known such cases yourself, I dare say, Mr. Josceline.'

'Yes;' the word was snapped out sullenly, like the closing of a spring lock. To the ears of his visitor the tone seemed only to express contempt, in sympathy with her own, for all such ne'er-do-wells; but Ella knew that the conversation had somehow become distasteful to her father. As usual, therefore, she instantly came to his relief.

'What is it this Mr. Vernon has done which is so dreadful?' she inquired pitifully. It was natural to her to feel pity for persons in misfortune, even when merited, rather than indignation and a desire for further penalties.

'Well, instead of entering a profession, like every other young man in his position, the poor creature took to writing—writing stories.'

'But if he didn't write other people's names on cheques,' said Ella, laughing, 'which would be a very wicked sort of story, why should he not? There is no harm in it.'

'My dear young lady, of course there is no harm in it,' said Mrs. Armytage, gravely—'that is, as an amusement; but, as I was just now remarking about painting (and had the happiness to find your father agreed with me), the calling of letters is not one to be undertaken seriously by—well, I don't say gentlemen, because I don't wish to be personal, and this young man (apart from his pursuit) is very presentable—by persons who have been born to better things. What do you say, Mr. Josceline?'

'My dear madam, it is unnecessary for me to say anything. You have expressed my own sentiments in the happiest manner. It must be conceded, however, that a man may do what he likes so long as he remains single. The evil is when a woman attempts to gain a position for herself by any other means save those which are in accordance with common usages and—and—the fitness of things. We shall have the pleasure of seeing you again at the *table-d'hôte*, I conclude?' for Mrs. Armytage had risen to go.

'Oh, certainly! Then I shall have the honour of introducing you to the Professor! He is ranging the hills just now in pursuit of the painted lady—a butterfly,' she added in explanation, as Mr. Josceline slightly raised his eyebrows. 'As for you, Miss Ella, with your papa's permission, I shall henceforth take you under my wing.' And with a pleasant nod, that would have been somewhat familiar but that it was neutralised by a certain jutting and swan-like movement which characterised her on momentous occasions, Mrs. Armytage swam out of the room.

'A very remarkable woman,' observed Mr. Josceline when the door had closed behind her.

'But, my dear papa,' said Ella, hesitatingly, 'she did not strike me as being—well—quite a lady.'

'She didn't say she was, my dear, and we should never find

fault where there is no pretence. I confined myself to saying she was remarkable; she is a woman of character, and has already been of the greatest use to us by giving us the *carte du pays*. You think it was wrong of me to suck her brains, and especially to lead her to believe she had made such a favourable impression on us? Yet she came here to suck ours, and to produce that very impression. Do you suppose she really came to give me a linseed poultice? You may take my word for it she has forgotten all about it, and in that case I am glad it *was* linseed, or we should, perhaps, have made acquaintance with it in the form of some "*entremet*" at the *table-d'hôte*."

## CHAPTER VI.

## A HAZARDOUS DESCENT.

It was soon made known to the guests at the *Ultramarine* that the Honourable George Emilius Josceline and his daughter would honour the *table-d'hôte* with their presence; but what was by no means so certain, and was debated among the great powers with considerable energy and bitterness, was, where were they to sit? From the very earliest ages this question has always been a supreme one, and very much to my content; for when I read of the eminent specimens of humanity who have made a point of this matter of precedence, and behold living ones concerning themselves about it, and reflect that I myself don't care one button where I sit, provided the chair is comfortable and not in a draught, I cannot but experience some sensation of superiority. To my mind, there are few things so curious as to see a lady arranging beforehand the position of her guests at the dinner-table, without the least regard to how A, as a neighbour, is likely to get on with B, but solely according to the great principles of *Debrett*: the effect of which is sometimes very curious.

'By Jove, sir,' a great painter once confided to me, 'if that wretched woman' (mentioning a hostess of considerable fashion) 'did not send me down to dinner after a captain in a marching regiment, as though I had been a painter and glazier!'

These individual wrongs, as I told him, will sometimes be inflicted; but social order in the general must be maintained, or where are we? The person who has the most right to complain, on such occasions, is the master of the house, who, with a list of couples as long as that of the greyhounds at a coursing meeting crumpled up in his hand, walks about his drawing-room before dinner like a man with something heavy on his mind, and separates the most sociable pairs. 'You mustn't take that girl, Plantagenet,' he whispers; 'you must take Lady Dowdey.' Then he shrinks into a corner, takes his list out again as though it

were a writ he was about to serve upon his guests, and he very much ashamed of it, and extracts another sentence of separation.

In a private house, whatever perplexity and agony of mind are thus undergone by the master of it, the question of precedence is thus managed somehow, but at a *table-d'hôte* matters are different. 'Seniority,' as a rule, prevails over the 'nomination system,' and those who have been longest at the hotel take the highest place at the board. It is far from analogous to the theory of the survival of the fittest, since in the case of the *Ultramarine* it might actually have happened through death, or a more fashionable sort of 'departure,' that such persons as Mr. and Mrs. Wallace should have found themselves at the top of the mahogany tree. Indeed, that very argument was made use of, with her accustomed directness, by Mrs. Armytage, when maintaining against Mrs. Jennynge that the new arrivals should sit at her own right hand. 'They have a claim to it,' she urged, 'by social position; whereas if you stick to the hotel regulations, they will have to sit below the Wallaces—a position obviously repulsive to one's sense of right.'

But Mrs. Jennynge, who always shook when agitated, objected like a very aspen leaf; she foresaw that with Mrs. Armytage on one side of them, and Mr. Felspar on the other, her daughter and herself would be cut off from all communication with the Joscelines—a position of affairs she was by no means inclined to accede to.

'You want to keep them all to yourself, Mrs. Armytage,' she said, with unwonted courage; 'and we won't submit to it. What is your opinion, Mrs. Lott?'

Mrs. Lott, whose place at dinner was at the lower end of the table, opined that the ordinary rules of the hotel should not be infringed.

'The rule of the hotel,' said Mrs. Armytage, boldly, 'is that all personal friends, even though they may not have arrived at the same time, sit next to one another at dinner, and the Joscelines are *my* personal friends—that is, they have now become so.'

'By adoption?' inquired Miss Jennynge, stung to sarcasm.

'No, miss; by community of ideas, and—and by equality of social position; that is to say, though my husband's name may not be actually in the Peerage, his pre-eminence in the scientific world—I beg your pardon, Miss Jennynge; I did not catch your exceedingly courteous interruption.'

'I said "Rubbish,"' observed that young lady, calmly; and indeed Mrs. Armytage was very well aware that she had done so.

Then an idea entered that great woman's mind which could only have occurred to one with a genius for administration; she resolved, as other great rulers of mankind—such as emperors and kings—have done before her when oppressed by circumstances, namely, to remove the seat of government altogether.

'I'll tell you what I'll do,' she said, with an air befitting the

momentous character of her resolve; 'I shall migrate to the bottom of the table, and sit with them *there*.'

'A very good plan,' observed Mrs. Lott, who would thus be brought into close proximity with the desired objects, 'and one which will content all parties.'

'If you go there you shall stop there!' cried Miss Jennynge, vehemently. 'Mamma, remember you will henceforth take the head of the table.'

This terrible threat was not without its effect upon Mrs. Armytage.

Pope Clement and his successors who removed from the Eternal City to Avignon, it will be remembered, did not stay very long there, and were glad enough to get back to Rome. And, supposing they had found the Vatican occupied by somebody else!

'Very good,' said Mrs. Armytage, in a tone of quiet resignation; 'then let matters run their own course.'

From this, one would have imagined that she would have taken no further action in the affair; but she was not one of those diplomatists who advocate a masterly inaction, and let things slide. She put on her outdoor things, and sallied forth in the direction taken by the Professor. A husband's ear is doubtless the most fitting one in which a wife can confide her troubles; but then he must not have a bee (or a butterfly) in his bonnet. The erudition of Timothy Armytage, F.R.S. and V.P.R.S., had so absorbed, not to say corrupted, his brain, that he could no more understand the delicacies of a question of precedence than a schoolboy. After pursuing the cliff-path for a few hundred yards, she diverged into a quiet cove, where she knew Mr. Aird and Davey were usually to be found at that period of the afternoon. The descent was not easy for a lady of her build and stature; nor could little Davey have accomplished it but for the help of his father's hand, which never unclasped its hold till they reached the shore. They came hither for Davey's lessons in geography, history, and spelling, which were carried on in a singular manner. By no means from want of wits, but of opportunity, and from chronic ill-health, the child was backward in his studies; which were pursued in summer time not in the ordinary fashion, with books and slates, at all, but in the open air. Mr. Aird drew maps, and figures, and words upon the silver sand with his walking-stick, and gave his lectures *sub Jove*, like a philosopher of old. Here the parallel would have ended—for the old Indian was by no means a philosopher as to patience and temper—had not paternal love stepped in, and, out of very unpromising material, fashioned a most tender teacher. Davey, too, had his little stick, with which he journeyed over the four quarters of the globe—delaying most in Asia, where jungles and tigers do most abound, whereof his father had much to tell him; totted up vast sums in pounds, shillings, and pence; and cultivated literature. It was a pretty sight (save for those who can only recognise that beauty which is but skin deep) to see the sun-



browned and withered man imparting to the child of his old age these rudiments of knowledge. The affection in the teacher's face was well understood by the pupil, but a certain grave anxiety that also lurked there was unintelligible to him. There were other reasons for that look of pain; but what was secretly gnawing at his father's heart was the presentiment that these immature fruits of the tree of knowledge were doomed never to ripen; that the boy himself had the seeds of early death in him. It was not solely because he was his only child that little Davey was his father's idol, but because he had a foreboding that he would at no distant date have only the memory of him to enshrine. It was the opinion of a great doctor he had consulted that his son had remained in India a year too long; a verdict bitterer than wormwood to him, since he himself had retained him there, partly because the lonely man could not bear to part with him, and partly because, in just twelve months, a large pension would become due, after which he could return home and dwell there. The home, however, was England and not Scotland, the climate of which was too severe for Davey.

On the afternoon in question, the pair, after going through their educational curriculum, had travelled together to the father's birthplace (a village which occupied, on their map, by the bye, a much larger space than that allotted to it by hydrographers), and were putting the usual finishing touch to their labours, which consisted in the formation of the word 'Edith' upon the sands by Mr. Aird, and the copying of it by the child—a sacred conclusion to the lessons for the day, for it was his dead mother's name. As Mr. Aird stood regarding the rough letters which the tide was presently to erase, but which were engraved on his own innermost heart as on a tombstone beneath which she lay, his attention was arrested by a smothered voice from the cliff above.

'Mr. Aird, Mr. Aird, my head is going round! I want you to help me down!'

He looked up and beheld what he judged, by the voice, to be Mrs. Armytage; her face was averted from him, and kept close to the cliff, down which she had been proceeding backwards, and on all fours, until fear and giddiness had checked her progress.

'Confound the woman, what does she want here?' he muttered.

'I'm going, I'm falling!' continued the lady, in piteous accents. 'I shall be dashed to pieces; help, help!'

In spite of this urgent appeal, to which little Davey also added his entreaties ('She'll roll down, papa, and come flop'), he quietly drew the sand over his wife's name with his stick before proceeding to her rescue. He was a kind-hearted man at bottom, but he had a sense of proportion, and rather than leave that sacred name for such a daw as Mrs. Armytage to peck at, he would have seen her roll twice the distance, which, indeed, was not very considerable.



At present, however, she resembled not so much a daw as those birds of prey which, having been shot by the keeper, are nailed to the door of his master's barn; or rather, perhaps, from her majestic size, the spread eagle of Prussia. Only those whose heads are apt to 'go' or 'turn round' when confronted with precipices can fully appreciate her position. When she heard Mr. Aird scrambling slowly up towards her she uttered an ejaculation of thankfulness. 'I should have been gone,' she said, 'in another moment. Pray don't leave me.'

'But, my dear madam, I can't stay here all day upon all fours. You must make an effort.'

'I tell you I can't; I scarcely dare to breathe—good gracious!'

Here a large stone, upon which one of her feet rested, gave way, and nearly carried away her would-be deliverer in its descent. The removal of this support made the poor lady's position to the last degree precarious. She would have said her prayers, but such was her agony of mind that she could not recall them to her recollection.

'Take hold of me,' she murmured piteously, 'take hold of me.'

'My dear madam,' replied Mr. Aird—whose countenance, I am afraid, indicated much more amusement than anxiety—'if I do so, it must be by the leg.'

'By all means,' said the lady, eagerly—she felt that it was no time for false delicacy—'take hold of it tight.'

By this means, and following her preserver inch by inch, she accomplished the descent in safety.

'Upon my word, Mr. Aird,' she said presently, as soon as she found her footing and her breath, 'I am greatly obliged to you.'

'I assure you, madam,' he replied with a bow, 'that it gave me much pleasure to assist you.'

'And only to think,' she cried, 'that I should have incurred this peril on an errand of mercy!'

'That indeed seems very surprising,' returned her deliverer, gravely.

'Yes, I came to seek you and your dear boy.' Here, in looking solemnly upwards to give evidence of her sincerity, she caught sight of the cliff. 'Good gracious!' she exclaimed, 'how am I ever to get up again?'

'We will see to that afterwards,' said Mr. Aird, drily. 'First accomplish the errand of mercy.'

'Well, it's about poor Mr. Josceline and his daughter. I have just made their acquaintance, and a more interesting couple you cannot imagine.'

'Indeed!' answered Mr. Aird, in a tone which unmistakably conveyed, 'They don't interest *me* in the least.'

'Poor Mr. Josceline is a great invalid, Mr. Aird, like yourself.'

'Who told you I was a great invalid, ma'am?' inquired the old Indian, sharply.

As a matter of fact Mrs. Armytage had gathered from one of

the hotel servants that Mr. Aird was occasionally subject to great pain, and had jumped to the conclusion, which, indeed, was a correct one, that he was the victim of some chronic complaint.

'Nobody told me,' she cried, 'but I gathered from the expression of your face that you were a sufferer. If it is not so, I am delighted to hear it. I am sure you will not feel less for those who do suffer. Mr. Josceline is a martyr to rheumatism of the heart.'

'He must be a very communicative individual, madam, to have told you all that on so short an acquaintance.'

'On the contrary, he is a reserved man, but one who can appreciate and reciprocate genuine sympathy. He and his daughter wish to come to the *table-d'hôte* this afternoon, but their places will be next the door, and he is afraid of the draught. He did not tell me so, you will understand, but I gathered it. Now it struck me that you would not mind letting them have your seats—which are quite sheltered—and moving down a couple of places.'

'My dear madam, I have not the least objection to your new friends sitting on my side of the table, but why should they not sit below instead of above us?'

'I thought of that of course; that would be the proper course; but that would separate your dear boy from his friend, Mr. Vernon. And if they went below him, there would be the draught again.'

'Don't send away Mr. Vernon, papa,' pleaded little Davey. 'I love Mr. Vernon.'

'That's just what I thought, observed Mrs. Armytage; 'I said to myself, "There's little Davey and his friend to be considered."'

'I am obliged to you, madam,' said Mr. Aird, his natural astuteness failing him for once in view of this proof of solicitude for his offspring. 'You may tell Mr. Josceline that he may have my place with pleasure.'

'That is only what I expected of you,' exclaimed Mrs. Armytage, not, however, without some secret exultation at the success of her diplomacy. 'I was sure you would be glad to oblige a gentleman of Mr. Josceline's quality. Now, if I could only get up that cliff.'

This aspiration had preoccupied her mind, or she would never have expressed her satisfaction in terms so injudicious, which aroused, if not her companion's suspicions, at least his prejudices. He had reigned supreme for too many years as Chief Commissioner at Bundelcumbad to admit the pretensions of any British Brahmin, and thought himself quite as much a person of quality as this sprig of nobility.

'I dragged you down, madam,' he observed, coldly, 'but I honestly tell you that I am quite unequal to the task of dragging you up.'

'Pray don't say that, Mr. Aird,' pleaded the lady. Time was getting on, and the idea of being late at the *table-d'hôte* on a

supreme occasion presented itself to her in colours of eclipse. 'I could not attempt such a thing alone.'

'Nevertheless, when the tide comes up, in about half an hour,' said the other, looking at his watch, 'I think you will make an effort. Davey, my boy, you and I must be going.'

'You would never desert a female in distress,' exclaimed the unfortunate lady.

'Of course not, my dear madam; I'll send a boat round from the village. The Professor will come for you himself, no doubt. I'll tell Mrs. Trant about the change of places, and ask her to keep an *entrée* warm for you.'

Hand in hand with the child, he had already ascended the cliff beyond her reach, or it is certain she would have clung to him like an octopus. As it was, this melancholy result of her diplomacy, at the very moment, too, of its seeming triumph, was too much for her endurance; she plumped down on the sand, with her back to the foe, and fairly burst into tears of vexation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### WHEN THE CAT'S AWAY.

I AM afraid Mr. Aird did not increase his ordinary rate of speed when returning to the hotel. Little Davey and he had always plenty to talk about in the colours of the sea and sky, the grotesque formation of cliff and rocks, and all the wonders of the shore. Once the child inquired, but with more curiosity than apprehension, 'The tide won't come up and drown Mrs. Armytage, will it, papa?' but on being assured that it would not, the topic was dismissed as one of inferior interest. Before they reached home, however, they met the Professor himself, returning from a scientific expedition, with his butterfly net and a tin case slung round his neck, such as Gargantua might have used for his sandwiches.

On hearing that Mrs. Armytage was a prisoner in Wychett Cove he expressed a mild surprise. 'There is nothing to be gathered there but samphire; the painted lady hardly ever visits it, and is difficult to catch on the sand. What on earth took her there, I wonder?'

Mr. Aird shrugged his shoulders. 'Perhaps she went to bathe, and, finding us on the shore, didn't like to mention it. She begged me to tell you she wished a boat sent for her.'

'Dear me,' said the Professor, 'that reminds me; I have found a curious specimen of the oar-beetle. We are told, Davey, we might learn of the little nautilus how to sail; we could also learn of the oar-beetle how to row.'

He sat down, opened his case, and began to lecture. Davey was entranced with the specimen, and that was enough for

Mr. Aird. Never had professor a more attentive audience. Presently, upon the summer air was borne the sound of a distant gong.

‘That’s the half-hour bell for the *table-d’hôte*!’ exclaimed Mr. Aird. ‘Why, my dear sir, you have quite forgotten Mrs. Armytage.’

‘Not at all, not at all,’ said the Professor, with a last fond look at his entomological treasures ere he closed the box. ‘Let me see, what was it you said she wanted? Yes; I remember—a boat.’

He moved pensively towards the village to procure the article, while Mr. Aird repaired to Mrs. Trant’s parlour to give notice of the new arrangements at table.

The astonishment of the Joscelines was considerable when the neat-handed Phoebe appeared in their apartment and informed them, with Mr. Aird’s compliments, that he had much pleasure in giving up his seats that Mr. Josceline and his daughter might be out of the draught.

‘There must be some mistake,’ said Ella.

‘Not at all, miss,’ said Phoebe. ‘Mr. Aird understood from Mrs. Armytage that your papa had the rheumatics.’

‘Quite right,’ interposed Mr. Josceline, blandly. ‘Say we are deeply obliged to him. By the bye, where *are* the seats?’

‘At the head of the table, sir, next to Mrs. Armytage herself.’

‘I thought so,’ murmured Mr. Josceline; then, when the girl had left the room, ‘The fact is, my dear Ella, our friend Mrs. Armytage is Metternich, Talleyrand, and Machiavelli all rolled into one. But some little rift has taken place in the lute of her diplomacy. However, it is very kind of this Mr. Aird.’

Ella thought so also, but felt no little surprise that her father should have expressed such a sense of a stranger’s civility; for, though his good manners forbade his showing any pride in the ordinary sense of the word, he was by nature somewhat exclusive, and rarely welcomed attentions which he had not encouraged. On this occasion, however, when Mr. Josceline took his seat at table, he was not only gracious in his personal acknowledgment of Mr. Aird’s kindness, but so cordial that that gentleman was unable to maintain his determined attitude of frigid politeness; it melted before Mr. Josceline’s courtesy, and fairly gave way before the smile which accompanied Ella’s introduction to him.

When Mr. Josceline said, ‘I am afraid our good friend Mrs. Armytage somewhat exaggerated my little ailment,’ his look and tone so fully conveyed he understood that lady, that Mr. Aird was drawn towards him still more nearly; and when Ella had taken friendly notice of little Davey—which was as natural for her to do as for a duck to take to the water—the father’s heart was won.

In the meanwhile, the two new arrivals were the centre of general attraction—a circumstance which, though well perceived by the one, was unobserved by the other, and caused Mrs. Percival-Lott to remark to her husband in a whisper that a little shyness in a young girl was in her opinion more becoming than

an artificial confidence. The sensation they produced, however, was not a little counteracted by that excited by the absence of Mrs. Armytage, whose vacant chair at the head of the table rivalled in interest, in Mrs. Jennynge's eyes, that of Banquo's in *Macbeth*. Was her rival there, or was she not there? she could scarcely tell; but a feeling of enfranchisement gradually gathered strength within her.

It was not until the soup was removed, that Mr. Aird looked across the table, and inquired of the Professor whether he had despatched the boat for Mrs. Armytage.

'The boat?' returned the Professor, who as usual was immersed in scientific speculation—'oh, yes, I did! but, the wind and tide being both against it, the man said it would take time.'

'But, my good sir,' observed Mr. Vernon, who had learned the state of affairs from his little neighbour, 'it is almost high tide. Will not your wife be in some danger?'

'Our neap tides,' returned the Professor, philosophically, 'unless the wind is exceptionally high, do not rise on this part of the coast much beyond five feet.'

It occurred to the company that as Mrs. Armytage also was certainly not much 'beyond five feet,' she might suffer considerable inconvenience even from a neap tide, but it seemed cruel to disturb such equanimity. Nevertheless, a touch of sympathy was not altogether wanting.

'I have ordered one of the *entrées* to be kept warm and brought in for her,' observed Mr. Aird, 'as soon as she makes her appearance.'

'You are very good,' said the Professor, looking ruefully at his champagne, to which he had helped himself much more liberally than circumstances had generally permitted him to do; 'but I think, after so trying an adventure, she had better dine quietly in her own apartment.'

'*Much* better,' assented Mrs. Jennynge, confidently. 'If she has got wet, indeed, I should recommend her going to bed immediately, with a hot bottle to her feet, and a mustard plaster over her chest.'

'That sounds very sensible,' agreed the Professor.

'I am told,' said Mr. Aird, gravely, 'that the only sure method of avoiding the possible effects of a severe cold is to keep one's room, thereby maintaining an equable temperature, for several days.'

'There's nothing more in accordance with the rules of science,' assented the Professor, drily; 'but there is occasionally a difficulty with the patient.'

'But a husband should use his authority,' remarked Mrs. Jennynge.

'You must remember, my dear madam,' whispered the Professor, slyly, as he emptied the last dregs of the champagne bottle, 'that you are a widow.'



'Indeed, sir, I can never forget it,' she answered with a sentimental sigh. 'By the bye, Mr. Felspar, we have not had the pleasure of seeing you this morning.'

Mr. Felspar was employed on a work of art for Mrs. Jennynge, which, though of a melancholy nature, had its compensations for her: he was painting a picture of her late husband, from photographs and other data with which she was constantly supplying him in the way of traits and recollections; and though, as she observed, 'it reopened the floodgates of memory,' it also gave her the opportunity of 'gushing' to her heart's content, and also of patronising the artist.

'The weather was so beautiful that I could not resist doing a little out-of-door work this morning; but you will see me to-morrow,' said Mr. Felspar.

Mrs. Jennynge shook her head in a manner that reprobated out-of-door work as compared with that of making illustrations from the tomb; and Mr. Vernon observed, 'Since the weather has set in so fine, by the way, how about our picnic?'

The project had long been a topic of general conversation at the *Ultramarine*, but hitherto a continuance of wet weather had prevented its accomplishment; moreover, the idea, though emanating from Vernon, had, as usual, been seized upon and made use of as her own by Mrs. Armytage, which alone sufficed, in the eyes of some of the party, to make it unpopular. Now, however, that that lady was absent, and a ray of hope began to twinkle that she might be shut up with an attack of bronchitis, or at least catarrh, for some days, the proposal was received with favour.

'I doat upon picnics,' observed Miss Jennynge, 'and so does mamma.'

'It seems to me, my dear,' remarked that lady, whose courage was growing with every moment of her enemy's absence, 'that we are not quite in the same position as we were when we last discussed that subject.'

'Hear! hear!' said Mr. Percival-Lott, softly; partly to encourage the speaker, and partly to express sympathy with the feelings which he imagined to be actuating her.

'When the cat's away,' whispered Mr. Wallace to his wife, 'the mice will play. That's what the old lady means.'

Mrs. Wallace laughed as she always did at her husband's jokes; an excellent thing in any wife, and certainly not more than may be fairly expected when, as in this case, the husband makes but one joke a year or so; but her little outburst of hilarity, as it happened, was most unfortunate.

'I was about to say,' continued Mrs. Jennynge, gravely, 'when interrupted by what I must be permitted to designate somewhat misplaced laughter, that we are not quite in the same position as when the subject of the picnic was first mooted, by reason of an addition—I am sure a most welcome addition—to our little party.'

'If you are so good as to allude to myself and daughter,

madam,' said Mr. Josceline, as Mrs. Jennynge gravely inclined her head in his direction, to give point to her remark, 'I am sure we shall be only too happy to fall into any scheme for the general amusement.'

'Then, Mr. Aird,' said Mrs. Jennynge, whose style, it will be seen, had borrowed something of the majesty of her absent rival, 'what do you think of a picnic on the Danecliff—we can't take advantage too quickly of this magnificent sunshine—say to-morrow?'

'My dear madam, if you ask me what I think of a picnic,' returned the ex-Commissioner, stiffly—for the patronage which even from Mrs. Armytage was unpalatable to him was from Mrs. Jennynge intolerable—'I can only say that I detest it; I believe it to be an invention of the doctors to promote diseases of the lungs and liver.'

Before any one could combat this amazing dogma, 'What do *you* think of a picnic, Davey?' inquired Mr. Vernon of his young friend.

'If it's dining in the open air,' replied the little fellow, cautiously, 'I should like it dearly. We could sit in the trench of the Danecliff, papa dear, quite out of the wind.'

'Supposing the rash act has been determined upon, Mrs. Jennynge,' pursued Mr. Aird, with a transparent pretence of having paid no attention to the opinion of his offspring, 'I think the Danecliff will be as good a place as any for the commission of it. It's close to home, so that we can get there and back again and have the whole thing over as soon as possible.'

Under cover of this attractive picture of the promised treat, Ella had a hearty laugh at the sudden change of front assumed by her neighbour. 'I don't think papa is fond of you at all, Davey,' she said to the child, with a kind smile.

'Oh, but he is, and so is Verney!' replied the little fellow, simply.

'We are fond of him, Miss Josceline; but I do assure you we do not spoil him,' observed the young gentleman thus alluded to. 'We are supposed to have discovered the happy medium between spoiling and indulging.'

'Mr. Vernon does spoil the boy,' said Mr. Aird, delighted with this notice of his favourite; 'it is all I can do, Miss Josceline, by reproof and—and—severities, to counteract it.'

The notion of severities, as practised on little Davey by his parent, tickled his two listeners very much, and caused them to interchange laughing looks, to which Mr. Felspar contributed his quota.

'I am glad, Aird,' he remarked, 'that somebody has at last had the courage to hint to you what a wicked boy Davey is growing up.'

'But I never said that, indeed,' protested Ella.

'My dear young lady, it is never worth while to notice what Mr. Felspar says,' observed Mr. Aird, with gravity. 'But, especially, don't you listen to him if he proposes to paint you.'

Ella blushed a little, becomingly and not confusedly, for the old Indian's tone was too good-natured to cause her any real embarrassment. She found herself getting on with her new neighbours much more agreeably than she had anticipated; while Mr. Josceline, on his part, had made a conquest, by quite other means, of Mrs. Jennynge and her daughter. If Mrs. Armytage had been present, and, as it were, in possession of him, they would, perhaps, have been inclined to be antagonistic, and given him some trouble; but, as it was, his easy manners (which they afterwards spoke of as his 'affability') and dexterously manifested desire to please—combined, of course, with the recurring recollection that he was own brother to the Earl of Boroughby—caused them to fall easy victims. Next to natural gaiety and good manners (which are a rarity indeed) the art of assuming them is invaluable, and Mr. Josceline possessed it in perfection. When he ordered a pint of her favourite wine for himself, because he said a lady's opinion upon hock was incontestable by reason of the delicacy of her taste, Mrs. Jennynge experienced a fanatical impulse, difficult to repress, to tell him to order a gallon at her own expense. Nay, on the wine question, he even contrived to get counsel's opinion from Mr. Wallace and Mr. Percival-Lott (who knew one hock from another rather less than if it had been the hock of a horse), and, in short, so ingratiated himself with the whole party that it seemed a wonder to them how the *table-d'hôte* could have ever got on without him.

It was when, thanks to him (for it had never been so before), conversation was becoming general, and little jets of laughter were being indulged in on all sides, that a loud tap was suddenly heard at the bay window. It was as though twelve o'clock had struck, and all Cinderella's footmen and horses had become rats and mice. Every one in a moment was as still as a mouse; for there stood Mrs. Armytage with her nose flattened against the pane, her eyes flashing fire, and her fingers beckoning to her husband with unmistakable vehemence.

'I think I had better go,' said the Professor, rising, as the terrible vision vanished in the direction of the front door. 'Why, the man said she couldn't be back for an hour and a half! I think she must have climbed up the cliff after all!'

No one had a doubt of it who had caught sight of Mrs. Armytage's gloves and attire, which exhibited undoubted signs of a prolonged pilgrimage upon hands and knees.

'Poor thing! Shall I go and see what I can do for her, papa?' whispered Ella, compassionately.

Mr. Josceline shook his head decisively. He knew that what would do Mrs. Armytage more good than anything just then was to speak her mind to the Professor.

'She seems to have had a bit of a scramble,' observed Mrs. Jennynge, it must be owned in no very pathetic tones.

'I am sure I should not like to have got up those cliffs,

exclaimed her daughter ; and indeed, with her high heels, her tight dress, and her waggling train, it would have been a feat worthy of record.

‘I am very sorry for her—exceedingly sorry,’ continued Mrs. Jennynge ; ‘but, except for anxiety on her account, I must say we have had a very pleasant dinner.’

‘Yes ; but there’s one thing,’ observed Mrs. Wallace, ‘which has made me miserable all the time. We have been thirteen at table, and therefore, you know, one of us is sure to die before the year is out.’

‘Oh, how horrid !’ exclaimed Mrs. Percival-Lott, with a becoming shudder. ‘How can you talk of such things ?’

‘It’s never done in the best society,’ murmured Mrs. Jennynge, looking to Mr. Josceline for corroboration. She was the oldest person present, and naturally deemed the remark personal as well as objectionable.

‘It is a superstition, foolish enough in itself,’ remarked Felspar, ‘and yet, as it happens, borne out by facts. The actuaries tell us that the probability is that one person out of thirteen will really “join the majority” in twelve months.’

‘Is that true ?’ whispered Mr. Aird, anxiously, to Vernon, and with an involuntary glance at the boy beside him.

‘Yes, quite true—of adults. It would not be so of a party of young people, of course.’

As the ladies rose to go, Mr. Aird uttered a sigh of relief which might have been mistaken for an incivility.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TWO METHODS OF PLEASING.

By desire of her father, Ella repaired after dinner to the ladies’ drawing-room, instead of returning, as she would have preferred, to their own sitting-room ; he was confident that the more they knew of her, the more she would be liked by her own sex (or at least by the best of them), and he did not wish them to compromise themselves by expressing in her absence an opinion which, on a short acquaintance, might fall short of her merits. As a man of the world he was well aware that, when a new arrival comes under discussion in any community, the general tendency is to criticise rather than to commend ; and for the same reason he himself repaired with the gentlemen to the billiard-room. He would have pressed the matter on Ella still more earnestly had it been necessary, had he been aware of the advantage she possessed on that particular evening, in the absence of Mrs. Armytage, whose patronage would have told sorely against her with the rest. The attempts made by Mrs. Jennynge



to place Ella under her own protection were feeble (because of the respect of that lady for her young friend's exalted rank), and easily put aside; and though Miss Jennynge's civility was a little overwhelming, she submitted to it with good-natured grace. If Mrs. Percival-Lott was a little stately, something must be excused to a bride (for such she really was) on the first occasion she had enjoyed of lording it over an unmarried girl of about her own age. Her husband (cunning fellow) had expressed his opinion to her that Miss Josceline did not bear close inspection—he had certainly stared enough at her at dinner to justify him in giving judgment on that point—and Mrs. Lott, while quite agreeing with him, had therefore become mollified in respect to that young lady.

As for Mrs. Wallace, Ella's cheerful smile and pleasant manner, so very different from that with which the other ladies treated her, at once won her simple heart. When the tea was handed round, Ella praised the cream, which indeed was very different at the *Ultramarine* to hotel cream in general.

'It is like Devonshire cream,' she said.

'Lor', my dear, that shows you have never been in Devonshire!' cried the farmer's wife. 'I should like you to taste our cream at Foracre Farm.' Whereupon Ella said she should like to have the opportunity, and Mrs. Wallace rejoined she would be 'kindly welcome.' It was not a very brilliant reply, but it had the merit of genuineness—in which brilliant replies are sometimes wanting—for it was plain she meant it.

There was a piano in the room, at which each of the young ladies sat down in turn, on Mrs. Jennynge's invitation. Her daughter sang an Italian song, which, however attractive to a trained ear, was a little bewildering in its 'alarms and excursions,' and which, requiring a very open mouth, and an exertion of the lungs that brought all the blood to the face, did not add to her personal beauty; the suspected bride warbled about a rover of the sea, to whom it would appear she had been wildly attached before she met with Mr. Lott; and Ella sang that simple but touching ditty 'The Land of the Leal.'

'Now that's what *I* call singing!' observed Mrs. Wallace, wiping her eyes, which had been shedding a rain of quiet tears throughout this performance—'I'm wearin' awa', John, like snow when it's thaw, John; that's just what our poor Jeannie did.'

'Was that your daughter?' inquired Ella, tenderly.

'No, my dear; she was my niece. God did not bless me with a daughter, but He lent me one who loved me as dearly as though she had been, though she was but my niece by marriage; then He thought fit to take her from me. His will be done. She was not unlike yourself, my dear, but older; perhaps half-way between you and Miss Jennynge yonder.'

'Really, Mrs. Wallace,' exclaimed the young lady alluded to, 'I wish you would find some other topic to talk about besides death! You have already made everybody uncomfortable once



before this evening by your reference to our being thirteen at table.'

'I'm very sorry,' said Mrs. Wallace, humbly; 'but it's a belief in Devonshire that when thirteen——'

'Then keep it for Devonshire,' interrupted Miss Jennynge, sharply; 'one comes to an hotel to enjoy oneself, madam, not to be preached at.'

'That's very true,' returned Mrs. Wallace, 'and I ask your pardon for speaking just now from a full heart. To young people like yourself it must have sounded out of tune, as you said of the pianner; whereas your good mother and me, who are growing near our latter ends——'

'Do you paint, Miss Josceline, as well as sing?' interrupted Mrs. Jennynge, with abruptness, and turning very red.

'I do a little; I am very fond of it.'

'Ah, you're a judge of paintings, no doubt; then you must come to our room to-morrow, and see my daughter's sketches.'

'Oh, they are nothing,' said Miss Jennynge, carelessly; 'they are merely records of our travels on the Continent.'

'That is not the opinion of some good judges, my dear Anastasia,' continued her mother, in mild remonstrance. 'I also have some records of another kind, Miss Josceline, to show you,' she added, pathetically; 'shall we say eleven o'clock? In the afternoon, you know, there will be the picnic.'

'I am sure I shall be very happy,' said Ella; which I am afraid was very far from being the truth. She had one of those natures, eminently unphilosophic, which prompts their possessor to give others pleasure at any sacrifice of herself, and it should be added that she generally achieved her object.

Her father was cast in a very different mould; yet he, too, on the whole, may be said to have made it his business to increase the sum of human happiness. He was thought to be 'the best company in the world' by very many persons of his own sex who were supposed to be judges in such a matter; and with ladies he had been at least equally popular. Advancing years, however, and indifferent health had, without dulling his natural gaiety, made the exhibition of it more difficult, since it was now necessary to conceal from others his private sense of effort; and especially was this the case when, as in the present instance, the society it was his mission to captivate was not to his taste. The atmosphere of a public billiard-room was, indeed, to the last degree unfavourable to such talents as those possessed by Mr. Josceline, and it was quite marvellous, under the circumstances, how they contrived to flourish: it resembled the success achieved in some East-end window-garden society, where a tea rose, with quite an unexpected felicity of association, is made to blossom in a milk-jug.

Mr. Josceline could play billiards of course—he could play anything, from quadrille to American bowls, that men of fashion

did play—not that he liked games, but because not to know them is sometimes a serious social disadvantage; but he was not a first-rate performer with the cue. It does not make a man popular to be so, because he is always beating people with it; his hand, too, is against every man's—not as at whist, where he has at least a partner to share his good fortune. At pool, indeed, which was the game proposed to be played on the present occasion, there is no easier method of winning the suffrages of one's fellow-creatures than to play indifferently; but Mr. Josceline scorned a triumph so ignoble, and, moreover, it had of late become a principle with him, never—unless something of importance was to be gained by it—to part with ready money. He could have held his own, had he cared to do so, with Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon; but not with Mr. Percival-Lott, who, like some doughty knight of old who had made a vow always to wear his visor down, made up for his silence in bower and hall by his dexterity with the cue, and took life after life with as much *sang-froid* as a crusader slaying Pagans; with this great advantage over his prototype, that he also pocketed their ransoms.

It was no pleasure to Mr. Josceline, as it was certainly no profit, to contend with this young gentleman; and after he had lost a few sixpennies with a gayer air than some others wear in winning them, he put by his cue on plea of fatigue, and watched the players from the sofa. The Professor was still closeted with his wife, and Mr. Aird, as usual, before smoking his cheroot, had gone to superintend little Davey's sleeping arrangements; so Mr. Josceline was left alone with the three young gentlemen. Under such circumstances, some men of mature years, who have a reputation for talk, recommend themselves to their company by attempting the rôle of Falstaff and succeeding in that of Silenus; but Mr. Josceline never stooped so low even to conquer. He told them anecdotes of the game, as though the literature of billiards had been his study, interspersed with such lively reminiscences of his own, of bets and wagers, as made Vernon and Felspar shake with laughter, and caused Mr. Percival-Lott to pause on his stroke—as the wild swan paused in her cloud at the song of the bard—ere he dropped his adversary into the pocket. When Mr. Aird appeared Mr. Josceline's tactics altogether altered. He became a patient listener, with a feverish desire to hear the truth about our Indian Empire, and even accepted from the ex-Commissioner one of its native productions in the shape of a cheroot, which he would as soon have thought of smoking as of eating. 'If you will allow me,' he said, 'I will put this in my cigarette case as a *bonne bouche*.'

The whole case of the cartridges, the chupatties, and the other causes of the mutiny were gone into by Mr. Aird, at a length that probably made his companion think, with Artemus Ward, that 'Indians is pison wherever found;' but his apparent interest never flagged. Nay, like some noble savage at the stake, he himself suggested fresh implements of torture to his persecutor.

‘Do you think the Sepoys may be really trusted now?’ he inquired.

‘No, sir; I will tell you what occurred six months ago, to my own personal knowledge. I was engaged to dine with the 123rd at Bundelcumbad. By the merest accident one of the officers chanced to glance into the cooking-tent, and this is what he saw. There was a joint roasting for the mess dinner, and half-a-dozen of the officers’ servants were standing round it, spitting on it. That is their way of showing contempt; and, as they couldn’t spit on us, they did it by deputy. These same Sepoys, looking as if butter wouldn’t melt in their mouths even in that climate, waited at dinner, each standing behind his master’s chair. When the mutton was brought up each officer rose and produced a revolver. The colonel made a neat little speech, inviting the men to take their places at the table, or, as the other alternative, to have their brains blown out. As he was a very determined man, they accepted his hospitality, though, after what had happened to the joint in the kitchen, it involved the loss of caste to every one of them. One has heard of “eating the leek,” but that is nothing in comparison with that meal of the Sepoys at Bundelcumbad; it would have taken all Mr. Felspar’s art to depict their countenances. The anecdote is trivial, but it is a fact, and I think a significant one as regards the adhesion of the Sepoys to the British “raj.”’

‘A more striking illustration of the social and political situation,’ said Mr. Josceline, gravely, ‘I never heard. It is a volume of history in itself;’ and he rose from his seat with a murmur about the necessity of his keeping early hours, but in reality to prevent the issue of a second volume. To him, to listen to a man expounding a theory was as bad as though he were detailing a grievance; it gave him a positive mental torture of which more phlegmatic natures have no experience, and in his present state of ill-health the pangs of boredom were felt more severely than usual. It must certainly, therefore, have been for some weighty reason that Mr. Josceline had been so patient under the flow of eloquence of the Commissioner of Bundelcumbad, and had even, as it were, pulled the string of the shower-bath with his own dainty hand.

## CHAPTER IX.

MRS. AND MISS JENNYNGE.

It is a trite observation, that petty things make up the sum of our lives, and that if the effect of them is, on the whole, agreeable, one or two great misfortunes can be borne *per contrâ* with comparative philosophy. It is not, however, so well understood how the indulgence in certain tastes, and even in certain amuse-

ments, will cause them in time to assume immense proportions in our own minds, so that, providing these are left to us, the weightier matters of the Law—and alas! even of the Gospel—sink into comparative insignificance. Among the male sex, the pursuit of what men call gallantry, and moralists by another name, is a striking instance of this, and is by no means confined to the frivolous and idle; while the game of whist is, for others, equally attractive. Metternich, though he applied himself to that amusement late in life, became so absorbed in it that even politics were neglected for it; and it is on record that several hundred persons were put to death (it was in Hungary, or some out-of-the-way place, so that no great stir was made about it) through an express messenger being detained for some hours in his ante-room, while he was just playing that last rubber which possesses such elastic attributes, and has kept many a better man up to the small hours, who otherwise makes it a principle to be in bed by ten o'clock.

What is rather curious, women, who are accused of frittering away their time on little things, rarely exhibit such complete devotion to trifles; their tastes, as the poet tells us are their passions, compared with ours, are 'as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine.' Nevertheless, some ladies have hobbies which they ride with considerable persistence. Mrs. Jennynge's hobby was a sort of hearse-horse, for it consisted in a devotion to the memory of her late second husband. Some suggested that this arose from the consciousness that a balance of affection was still due to him, since while he was alive she had not overwhelmed him with demonstrations of it; but the more charitable refused to countenance this scandal. Mr. Nathaniel Jennynge, who was much her senior, had, they said, entertained a prejudice against third marriages, and it was confidently expected that he would make a material protest against them in his will; whereas he had omitted to do so, and it was, they said, out of gratitude to him for his forbearance that his widow burnt incense to his manes.

Miss Anastasia, who had been left more dependent upon her mother than she wished people to know, was not very enthusiastic in these pious observances, though she had her reasons for a show of respect for them; but you could not know Mrs. Jennynge long without hearing a good deal more of her dear departed—'not lost,' she said, 'but gone before'—than, as a stranger to that good man, you were likely to want.

It was, of course, with no apprehensions of this nature, but still with no pleasurable expectations, that Ella repaired next morning at the time appointed to Mrs. Jennynge's apartment. She had not taken very kindly either to that lady or her daughter, but she always kept her word; and, moreover, not a little to her surprise, her father had expressed satisfaction at the invitation.

'Mrs. Jennynge evidently wishes to make friends, my dear, and young people should never refuse the hand of welcome.'



The last sentence, which certainly did not resemble Mr. Josceline's style, he had opportunely discovered in that stray volume of the *Mirror* for 1816 among 'the maxims and sentiments,' though he did not think it worth while to acknowledge his indebtedness.

Mrs. Jennynge and her daughter were in what the former would have called *en grande tenue*—attired with an elegance appropriate to a visit from the granddaughter of the Earl of Boroughby—while their apartment was arranged with a studied carelessness which would no doubt have reminded her of the 'interiors' at Boroughby Park, only she had never chanced to see them. There was an assemblage of nearly twenty splendidly bound volumes on the book-shelf, with a French dictionary hidden behind them, to which Mrs. Jennynge by no means intended to allude when she said that 'she never moved without her library.' On one table was every description of painting materials that the wiliness of the dealer in art could suggest; and on the other the most elaborate arrangement for the manufacture of artificial flowers in wax, for which the elder lady was wont to say with modesty, but some anomalousness of expression, that she had some little 'natural gift.' As a matter of fact she spent half her time about it, and placed her friends in much embarrassment from their inability to guess without assistance what object of nature she was engaged in imitating. Fortunately the variety was limited, since she only affected flowers of a hue that typified her forlorn condition. On the present occasion she was evolving violets, which did not admit of much confusion with their floral rivals. 'I cannot lay them "fresh and fresh,"' she said (a phrase which had an unfortunate resemblance to the "hot and hot" of the cheap restaurateur) 'upon his grave, my dear Miss Josceline; but I produce them, as you see, in fac-simile, as a chaplet for his marble brow.'

'She is speaking of papa,' observed Anastasia, in frigid explanation.

'Oh, indeed!' said Ella. It was not a very sympathetic reply, but then she had hardly recovered from the impression at first produced upon her mind that Mrs. Jennynge was insane.

'I venture to think they have some *vraisemblance*,' resumed the mourner, critically; 'and they have this advantage over the violet of our fields, that they do not fade and perish as, alas! those whom we love are wont to do, unless you put them to the fire.'

The last remark, of course, referred to the wax violets and not to the deceased, who, it is to be hoped, was not being exposed to such a crucial test. 'I am doing some amaranths for his dear birthday,' she continued, pathetically; 'you know the amaranth, of course?'

It was most fortunate that Mrs. Jennynge here reproduced a specimen in wax of that most classical, and, as poor Ella had



imagined, mythological flower, and thus enabled her visitor to conceal ignorance in admiration. 'These and a sprig of lavender are all the tributes fate has permitted me to pay to him.'

These words, so far beyond her ordinary style, Mrs. Jennynge delivered with a corresponding elevation of tone and manner; their effect upon her visitor was, however, naturally weakened by the fact that she knew nothing about the deceased. There was another circumstance which made any expression of sympathy a little difficult. Anastasia not only took no part in the conversation, but obviously despised it. She stood gloomily regarding her two companions with her thumb in her mouth; if you had taken it out and examined it, you would have found it, from constant suction, pale and flabby like the thumb of a washer-woman. Whenever she was annoyed, and especially, as on the present occasion, by her mother's behaviour, she took to her thumb for comfort. It was an admirable safety valve for her temper, since while she was sucking it she was compelled to be silent; but to a stranger its effect as a silent commentary upon a eulogy of the dead was, to say the least of it, incongruous.

'Behind this screen,' continued Mrs. Jennynge, pointing to a spacious enclosure of red baize used in winter time in the *salle à manger* to keep off the draught from the door, 'are such memorials of dear Nathaniel as I am able to carry about with me. I do not show them to everyone; but you, with your long line of noble ancestry, will know how to appreciate devotion to the departed.'

She led the way behind the screen, and poor Ella followed; a last glance at Anastasia revealed her frowning heavily, and sucking with such indignant vigour at her thumb that the action was audible, like that of an air-pump. 'These are Nathaniel's photographs; they bear a likeness to him of course, but ah! what a difference to what he was in life! The cabinets are, it is thought, the best.'

Even the cabinets, however, did not convey a very favourable impression of the deceased Mr. Jennynge. Perhaps the sun had not been propitious, but it had certainly portrayed a very commonplace individual—a short, pudgy man with a book in his hand, which, from the expression on his face, ought to have been a publican's ledger; it was labelled 'Lyrics of the Heart.' However, it was quite clear that Mr. Nathaniel Jennynge had not known what to do with it, nor even how to hold it. The circumstances of his finding himself in a mossy cavern, with a fountain springing up in alarming proximity to his white waistcoat, had doubtless deprived him of his usual repose of manner, for he looked very ill at ease. In another and smaller picture he was represented as leaning on a broken column in what was meant to be an attitude of meditation; but it was impossible to escape from the conviction that he had taken more than was good for him, and felt the need of external support.

‘I think I like the cabinet one best,’ observed Ella, quietly.

‘So most people say,’ sighed Mrs. Jennynges; ‘but of course it does not satisfy me.’

‘Of course not,’ said poor Ella; thinking, indeed, that, if it did, Mrs. Jennynges must be very easily satisfied. ‘Photographs seldom give the characteristic expression.’

‘You are quite right, my dear Miss Josceline. That is the very reason why I have employed Mr. Felspar—quite regardless of expense—to paint me a picture of my Nathaniel. I have supplied him with all the materials. This is his head—don’t be afraid, my dear,’ for Ella had started in alarm at the object presented to her notice. ‘It is only a cast, taken after death. Perhaps you have never seen one before?’

It so happened that Ella had seen one; and that very circumstance had contributed to her apprehensions. The girls at her Clapham academy had once been taken for a treat to Madame Tussaud’s exhibition, and the entertainment had very injudiciously included the Room of Horrors. It seemed to her that she was now looking at some duplicate specimen of those homicidal heads.

‘It is not pretty, of course,’ admitted Mrs. Jennynges, ‘but to the eye of an artist it is invaluable. What I say to Mr. Felspar is, “Here are the photographs of my dear Nathaniel, and this is the original”—dear me, there is Mr. Felspar.’

The door of the room was opened, and the artist’s voice was heard interchanging ‘How d’ye doos’ with Miss Anastasia. Ella seized the opportunity to escape, somewhat abruptly, from the screen and its memorials; and perhaps the joy of enfranchisement gave to her acknowledgment of the artist’s polite greeting a little more warmth than it would otherwise have exhibited. At all events, Mr. Felspar looked grateful for it, as he threw back his flowing hair by a quick movement of his head—an action as natural to him, when pleased, as it is to a dog to wag his tail.

‘I had no idea you had a visitor here, Mrs. Jennynges,’ he said.

‘Yes; Miss Josceline was so good as to look in upon us. But that need not take up your time, you know,’ she added, brusquely. ‘You can go on with my picture just the same.’

Anastasia’s thumb, which had been hurriedly withdrawn from her mouth to welcome the visitor, was within an ace of going in again at this remark; while poor Ella felt hot all over.

Mr. Felspar coloured a little (which was, after all, only professional), but his tone manifested no annoyance as he replied with a smile, ‘As I work by the piece and not by the day, Mrs. Jennynges, if I waste my time it is not you who suffer from it. I see, by the way,’ pointing to an unfinished drawing on the table, ‘that you, Miss Anastasia, have not been idle.’

‘Oh, it is nothing,’ returned that young lady, carelessly.

‘I have been trying one of those very headlands this morning, Miss Jennynges,’ observed Ella, ‘but I have not been nearly so

successful. I am sure I could never manage the distances as you have done.

'Mr. Felspar shaded them off for me,' answered Anastasia, bluntly.

'Indeed, I gave her but very little help,' put in the artist. 'If I can be of any similar use to you, Miss Josceline, with these unpleasant distances, you are very welcome to my assistance.'

'You are very kind; but I am quite a novice,' said Ella, 'and it would be very wrong to encroach upon your time.'

'Oh, we can spare him for an hour occasionally to *you*, Miss Josceline,' remarked Mrs. Jennynge; 'though I wouldn't say so to everybody.'

Mr. Felspar laughed good-naturedly, which put Ella at her ease; otherwise she would have felt no little embarrassment, since she naturally imagined that when Mr. Felspar was not rescuing the deceased Mr. Jennynge's features from oblivion, he was engaged professionally in giving lessons to Anastasia; whereas what he did for that young lady was quite gratuitous. At the same time it could hardly be called voluntary, since it was in response to a pretty broad hint of her mother's: 'A word of advice from *you*, Mr. Felspar, would be invaluable to my dear Anastasia.' Like most very rich people, Mrs. Jennynge derived great gratification from getting anything for nothing.

'When you come to the picnic this afternoon,' continued Mr. Felspar, 'I hope both you young ladies will bring your sketch-books. There are a great many "objects of interest," as the guide-book calls them, to be seen from the Danecliff, by help of which we can improve the shining hour.'

'But would it not teach them something to see you at work *now*?' inquired Mrs. Jennynge, graciously; 'they will be as quiet as mice, I am sure, so that you could give your attention just the same.'

'No, madam,' interrupted Mr. Felspar, drily; 'when I am engaged on anything of exceptional importance, I find it necessary to work by myself.' The tone in which he spoke admitted of no contradiction, else he had hitherto made no objection to Miss Anastasia and her mother being witnesses to his work. But in the case of Miss Josceline, something made him unwilling to exhibit himself before her in the degrading occupation of 'pot-boiling'; especially, too, as in delineating the late Mr. Nathaniel Jennynge he had to deviate a great deal from the strict line of truth (as exhibited in the human countenance), and, as regarded that of beauty, to borrow largely from his imagination. Indeed, he felt not a little uncomfortable, as it was, thus exposed in her presence to their hostess's patronage, and after a little further talk he withdrew himself into the sanctuary formed by the red baize screen, into which he was followed by Mrs. Jennynge.

'I am sorry,' said Anastasia, the moment her mother had disappeared, 'that mamma should have gone on so to you about papa.'

‘It is only natural——’ began Ella in extenuation.

‘It is *not* natural,’ interrupted the other, with hushed vehemence; ‘of course I know what you really think about it—it is a monomania. She had a painted window to his memory in our last house with “His spirit watches here” upon it; and now we have moved she has had it put up in our new home. His spirit can’t watch *everywhere*, you know; it is really too ridiculous.’

‘Still, if it pleases your mother?’ pleaded Ella.

‘It doesn’t please her,’ broke in Anastasia, with irritation; ‘she only wishes other people to believe it does. And, of course, she doesn’t impose upon them for an instant. Mr. Felspar, for example, though he is as poor as a rat, is quite ashamed of having undertaken to paint a picture from those horrible things.’ She pointed to the screen with her thumb, and then thrust it in her mouth as though it were its natural sheath.

It was curious, but very unpleasant, to see such a display of scorn and resentment in one to all appearance so artificial and devoid of human passion; it reminded one of the scream of a peacock.

‘Is Mr. Felspar a good artist?’ inquired Ella, eager to change the conversation.

‘Yes; Mr. Vernon says’—she hesitated a moment, then added, carelessly, ‘but then, to be sure, he is his friend—that he can do anything he chooses; there are some people who enjoy that sort of reputation, you know, who never do anything. He has a great name, however, for so young a man, in portrait-painting. And, of course, his advice even about landscapes and things is worth having.’

‘And is Mr. Vernon a painter too?’

‘Oh, dear, no; he is an author; he writes beautiful poetry and gets it published too—in the magazines. Did you not know that?’

‘I know scarcely anything,’ said Ella, modestly. ‘I have been shut up at school all my life, and we were not allowed to read the magazines. I shall be quite afraid of Mr. Vernon after what you have told me. And now I think I must wish you good-bye, as papa may be wanting me.’

‘But you are coming to the picnic, of course, and will bring your drawing materials, as you promised Mr. Felspar.’

‘Oh, I think I had rather not do that; I am quite ashamed of my poor efforts.’

‘No matter; Mr. Felspar will teach you to do better. We must all have a beginning, you know, and it will be such a pleasure to me to work with you.’

‘You are very good, I am sure,’ said Ella, gratefully; and took her leave more favourably impressed with her new acquaintance than she had been a few minutes ago.

Perhaps, however, it was not mere goodness that caused Miss Jennyng to be so pressing in her request that her new acquaintance should bring her drawing materials to the picnic; and I



doubt whether she would have pressed it had she seen Ella's sketch of the headland, which, apart from Mr. Felspar's improving touches, was, in reality, considerably superior to her own.

## CHAPTER X.

### DRIVERS AND WALKERS.

It is not to be supposed that all this time Mrs. Armytage has been nowhere; that the sun (so to speak) of Wallington Bay has dropped out of its own system; it was only in temporary eclipse. Of course there were many inquiries—*anxious inquiries*—on the morning after her little misadventure, when she did not take her usual place at the public breakfast table, after her health or the want of it; and, on the whole, the reports were reassuring. It was certain that she would not be up and about for a day or two. The Professor did not, indeed, afford this information with his own lips; he was retained in close attendance upon his lady, and could not be interviewed; but Phoebe said that Mrs. Armytage seemed 'that bad' with fatigue and worry, and 'that shook' with what she had gone through, that she could not get on her feet for days, 'if it was ever so.' And yet the picnic to the Danecliff was not postponed on that account.

Mrs. Armytage was not really a bad woman—not perhaps worse, on the whole, than the majority of her own charming sex; but, as a rule, they didn't like her. She was too managing and too masterful; she got her own way when she was up and doing; but when she was down, which is the crucial test of authority, no one bowed to it; that is, no one but her maid and the Professor, who could not help themselves. Such is the fate of all tyrants. It is a melancholy fact that there are thousands of respectable households who never enjoy themselves so much as in the absence of their head. He may be an excellent man in his way, hard working as a bread-winner, and unselfish in the matter of his own pleasures; but he inspires less of love than fear, and when he is away from his own house it is as though a weight were lifted from the hearts of its inmates. And sometimes, though not so commonly, this is the case with the female head. Mrs. Armytage was no enemy to pleasure, nay, she liked to see people enjoy themselves; but then it must be after her own fashion and under her own control. I remember seeing in an old comic journal of Tory politics a picture of a physical-force Chartist taking his little boy out for a holiday in the fields. The man had a truculent face, and in one hand he held a big stick, and in the other the 'Flag of Freedom' newspaper. 'Now, look here,' he observes to his trembling offspring, at the same time shaking his stick at him, 'I have brought you out here to enjoy yourself, and mind you do it,



or I'll know the reason why.' And of this good man Mrs. Armytage was an unconscious imitator.

Mrs. Jennynge did not even give herself the trouble to deplore her rival's absence, but took the command of the whole expedition with a light heart. She made her arrangements for the picnic with Mrs. Trant, just as though she had not succeeded to the command by a physical misfortune, and ordered the eatables and drinkables with great cheerfulness, while her prostrate enemy was confined to her own apartment upon a diet of toast and water-gruel. A cart and horse were despatched at one o'clock with all that was required for the feast, and the men had orders to lay the cloth upon the very summit of the hill—for there was scarcely a breath of wind—in order to command the greatest extent of view.

An hour afterwards the whole party started for the rendezvous, Mr. Josceline (by reason of the delicacy of his health) in a pony-carriage belonging to the hotel, with Mrs. Jennynge, while the rest followed on foot. What reason Mrs. Jennynge had for the use of a wheel carriage did not appear; it was certainly not because of her years. Indeed, she looked particularly fresh and (as Mr. Aird rather maliciously added) 'blooming;' doubtless she was excited by having such a distinguished person as the new arrival for her companion. The pair on wheels had to make a little *détour* to reach the top of the hill, which afforded opportunity for a little private conversation. If the lady was interested in the history of the house of Boroughby, the gentleman did not disdain to put a question or two respecting that of Jennynge. 'Nobility,' he observed, in answer to some flattering remarks of his companion, 'was no doubt an excellent institution; but what would become of it were not its ranks occasionally recruited from the great names in commerce. That of Jennynge in connection with the useful calling—or might he not term it an art?—of dry-salting was not unknown to him.'

This fact was very pleasing to Mrs. Jennynge's ears, and secretly a little surprised her.

'My late husband,' she nevertheless replied, 'was indeed very well known, I believe.'

'A great name on 'Change,' assented Mr. Josceline, quoting from he was not quite sure what, at a venture.

'Yes, indeed,' said Mrs. Jennynge, applying her handkerchief to her eyes; 'it was only when they lost him, however, that they found out my dear Nathaniel's value.'

She meant his moral worth, but the word 'Change no doubt had led Mr. Josceline's mind into more material channels, for he replied, 'I remember reading his will in the papers; he left a princely fortune, did he not?'

'He left me very tidily off,' said Mrs. Jennynge, modestly, 'but what was money to me when my Nathaniel was gone?'

'Except for the pleasure it might afford you from the exercise of acts of benevolence,' suggested Mr. Josceline, gravely.

'Just so,' returned the lady, remembering with gusto that she had given 50*l.*, after some haggling, to the widow of Nathaniel's clerk, who had fallen into difficulties. The recollection of this munificence gave her courage. 'You, too, Mr. Josceline, have loved and lost,' she said.

'Eh, what?' returned that gentleman, rather irritably, for the pony-carriage was not well hung, and he had been just shaken by a rut. Then suddenly becoming conscious of the subject of allusion, he frowned darkly. Mrs. Jennynge was not a sensitive plant, but she knew when she had leant her hand on broken glass.

'I am afraid I have touched a tender chord, sir; I only meant that you, too, have lost the partner of your joys.'

'Yes,' he replied, quietly, 'it was a long time ago, when my Ella was quite a child; but one does not forget such things.'

'Still one ought to—don't you think—in time?' observed Mrs. Jennynge, comfortingly.

'One ought,' he assented. 'One *does* sometimes.'

He glanced at the widow with what she thought the most gentlemanly sigh she had ever heard, and then fixed his eyes on the splash-board.

'Your daughter seems a most charming young lady,' observed Mrs. Jennynge, after an interval of silence and embarrassment.

'She was making the very same remark to me this morning about yours,' replied Mr. Josceline.

'Anastasia is generally admired—that is, in our own comparatively humble circle of society,' said Mrs. Jennynge with humility.

'Beauty and accomplishments, my dear madam, are a nobility in themselves,' answered Mr. Josceline, 'when, as in her case, they are accompanied by wealth'—he noticed a movement of negation made by the flowers and fruits in his companion's bonnet; it was so slight that by some persons it might have been attributed to the jolting of the vehicle—'or by great expectations,' he added, hastily, 'such endowments make their possessor the equal of any lady in the land.'

'The dear girl has expectations, of course,' rejoined Mrs. Jennynge, quietly—'very natural expectations—but she is entirely dependent upon me. My beloved Nathaniel—Mr. Felspar is doing a beautiful picture of him, you must see it some day—placed such entire confidence in my discretion.'

'That is not to be wondered at; yet I dare say, like many other loving husbands, he showed himself unwilling that you should form any fresh tie. When, as in your case, a woman has been thus left desolate in the heyday of her youth, it seems so hard——'

'Oh, no; there was no stipulation of any kind,' interrupted the lady. 'My excellent Nathaniel was too unselfish, too—too——'

'Too reasonable,' suggested Mr. Josceline; 'well, that was immensely to his credit, for, though there is a great deal of talk

about persons in your forlorn condition finding their happiness only in that of others, yet we are human after all, and retain our own individuality, our likes and dislikes, our capacities for affection—is it not so?’

‘It is, indeed,’ said Mrs. Jennynge; and she fixed *her* eyes upon the splash-board.

‘Nevertheless,’ pursued Mr. Josceline in a less plaintive tone, caused, perhaps, by the reflection that he had gone far enough in sentiment for that morning, ‘nevertheless, to persons of our time in life—or rather I should say of mine, for, as Ella and I were agreeing, one can scarcely believe that Miss Jennynge can be a daughter of your own—the contemplation of the pleasures of our children is one of the few enjoyments we have left to us. See yonder how our young people are enjoying themselves;’ and he pointed with his whip to where Ella and Anastasia, accompanied by Vernon and Felspar, could be seen approaching them by a short cut; they were evidently in high good humour, for their laughter rang through the still summer air. Behind them came the suspected bride, pushed (very suspiciously) up the hill by the application of her husband’s hands to her waist; next followed Mr. and Mrs. Wallace, with less demonstration of connubial bliss, a sober couple of the ‘John Anderson’ type; while in the rear came Mr. Aird and Davey, hand-in-hand, as usual.

The two young men were in great spirits, which with Vernon was a common case; but Felspar was naturally of a serene and philosophic turn of mind, which was the cause of no little raillery on the part of his friend and fellow-lodger. This afternoon, however, no one could complain of Mr. Felspar on the score of want of vivacity, for he was poking all sorts of fun at Vernon—it must be owned to the young ladies’ great amusement—on account of a commission he had received that morning, from his magazine editor, to write the letterpress in verse for a certain illustration to appear in the next monthly number.

‘It is generally understood,’ said Felspar, ‘that we artists are set to illustrate the poets; but the Jupiter of the “Mayfair Keepsake” has reversed all that. Mr. Woodlock has a drawing on hand of an Italian organ-boy with a monkey which he chooses to call “the Exile,” and Vernon is the bard directed to immortalise it in a poem. His eye has been in “a fine frenzy rolling” ever since breakfast, but he can’t find a rhyme to “exile.”’

In vain Vernon protested that his eye was all right—though not, perhaps, so much directed towards the main chance as that of a certain portrait-painter he could mention, and that he didn’t want a rhyme to exile: Felspar avowed that he knew better, and besought the young ladies to assist his rhymeless friend. ‘The poem must be sent by to-morrow’s post, and if you can’t find a rhyme, would you be good enough to suggest an idea or two? Vernon’s notion is that there should be white mice on the organ’—here they stopped on the hill to laugh, the poet as gaily as the

rest—‘and that the sight of them should suggest his distant home to the Italian youth and draw tears whenever he looks at them; but his difficulty—I mean Vernon’s difficulty—is that he don’t know and can’t find out whether white mice are native products of Italy. Do either of you happen to know?’

Though Mr. Felspar addressed both the young ladies, he looked towards Ella—indeed it would almost seem, since he had never shown such high spirits before, that it was she who had inspired them—and therefore she felt called upon to reply.

‘I don’t know about white mice,’ she said; ‘but if I had to write a poem on such a subject—which would be a task, however, utterly beyond my powers—I should bring the boy into some such scene as this, which would remind him ever so slightly of his own mountains and blue skies.’

‘On the contrary,’ said Felspar, ‘you should make him feel the contrast as strongly as possible. My dear Vernon, take him into Lincolnshire, where it’s all flat, and make him cry, because he has no hills to climb; because he gets beef and beer given him instead of macaroni and sour wine; because he is not devoured in this country by insects that rhyme with mice; because now and then he sees a silver coin, which I am sure he never did in Italy.’

‘Miss Josceline is quite right,’ said Vernon, interrupting this rhodomontade, ‘and I am much obliged to her for her suggestion.’

‘Perhaps she could find you a rhyme for exile,’ observed Anastasia, cynically; for she felt that she was no longer the first fiddle—a position which, as the only young unmarried lady in the hotel, she had hitherto enjoyed in relation to these two young men. Her remark fell flat—everyone knows the effect of the reproduction of a worn-out jest—and had a sobering influence upon the little company. Presently Ella dropped a pencil out of her drawing-case, and, Vernon helping her to find it, the two fell a few paces behind the other couple.

‘I hope, Miss Josceline,’ he said, ‘you don’t think I do my work, poor as it is, quite so mechanically as Felspar would have you believe.’

‘Indeed I don’t,’ she said, good-naturedly. ‘I quite understand Mr. Felspar’s fun. I know, when he is serious, that he is a great admirer of your talents.’

‘Oh, as to that, I have next to none,’ he answered; ‘it is Felspar’s way to speak more highly of his friends than they deserve, as compensation, I suppose, for his modesty as regards himself. He calls himself a portrait-painter, in which line he is, indeed, best known, but he has a keen eye for the beauties of a landscape and a cunning hand for their reproduction. You must see his drawings—which are chiefly taken from the neighbourhood—at our lodgings. They are really worth a visit.’

‘And is there no chance of our hearing some original readings from some one else?’ Ella inquired, silyly,

'No, indeed,' replied the other, assuringly; 'there is not the least danger of such an infliction.'

'I did not mean that at all,' said Ella, earnestly; 'you did not think I could be so rude, I hope. Indeed I should like to hear or read your poems.'

'You are very kind to say so. The public, I am sorry to say, are not so civil.'

'But it must be very interesting work writing stories and poems, and very pleasant to see them afterwards in print. You smile—you are thinking that women have a great deal of vanity.'

'Not at all; in that respect we men—those who are authors at least—are not one whit behind the ladies. I was smiling, because, though as you say, it is very pleasant to appear in print, my productions do not always meet with that good fortune. They are sometimes "declined with thanks" by wicked editors.'

'That must be very sad; what do you do then?'

'I smoke my pipe and think how unappreciated Keats was, and flatter myself mine is a parallel case. Then, like Bruce's spider, I try again.'

'And, like him, you will at last succeed,' said Ella, confidently; 'when merit joins hands with perseverance success is certain.'

'That's not in the copybooks,' answered Vernon, smiling; 'though it sounds a little like it.' Then, with a sudden change of manner, he added, 'It is, however, the honest utterance of a kind heart, and I do assure you, Miss Josceline, it has not been spoken in vain; encouragement, and from such lips, to a budding author is like the sunshine.'

'Dear me, what is the matter yonder?' interrupted Ella. She was not unwilling to escape replying to a compliment so warmly worded (though, fortunately, he had dropped his voice a little, so that it was possible for her to ignore it), and there was really some excuse for her exclamation of astonishment. Above them stood a group of people consisting of her father and Mrs. Jennynge with the walkers—who had joined them where the carriage road ceased—conversing and gesticulating in great excitement; and in the centre of them, and evidently the cause of their interruption, towered the well-known but unexpected form of Mrs. Armytage.

For the second time in the history of the Danecliff an enemy had taken possession of the hill.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PICNIC.

It had been a subject of surprise to the whole party, as they were toiling up the steep, that the men who had been sent ahead to set forth the feast upon the summit had not been visible; but the



explanation of it was now afforded. Just below the summit was a deep trench, dug by the Danes, in which, sheltered from the breeze, had grown up a little copse; and here, accompanied by her somewhat unwilling ally, the Professor, Mrs. Armytage had lain or sat in ambush, and falling upon the men in charge of the provisions, had compelled them to set them down in the hollow.

'Lay the cloth here, John,' she had said, imperatively, 'where we shall be out of the wind. As for sitting on the top of that hill, in my present state of health, I should as soon think of flying.'

John might have thought of flying, and indeed he did, but not for a moment did he think of disobeying Mrs. Armytage's behest, and the cloth was laid accordingly.

'It is rather a likely place for *Ophidia*,' the Professor had murmured, but so gently that the remonstrance had been not only ineffectual, but misconceived; his lady had imagined that he was referring to the trench as being the probable habitat of some species of butterfly.

'It is every way the most convenient spot,' she said, 'and nobody but an idiot would have fixed upon any other.'

The idiot, of course, was Mrs. Jennynge; and the counter-ordering of that lady's arrangements was, in fact, the convenience Mrs. Armytage had in her mind.

'They'll feel a little disappointed if they want a view,' hazarded the Professor, looking round upon the position, which was in fact a dry ditch; 'won't they?'

'Let 'em,' was the laconic reply.

The frame of mind of his good lady was indeed far from conciliatory; she had not forgotten that terrible scramble up the cliffs of Wychett Cove, and the loss of her dinner at the *table-d'hôte*, not to mention the physical ailments her fatigues had induced. These latter, however, it must be confessed, she had given out to be worse than they really were; she had made a shrewd guess at the state of affairs in her absence; that something like rebellion might be fermenting among her subjects, and she had resolved to recover her supremacy by a *coup d'état*. Unperceived by the rest of the household, she had stolen up with the Professor early in the morning to her place of ambush, and felt herself mistress of the situation and of her enemies.

The astonishment and chagrin of Mrs. Jennynge, on finding Mrs. Armytage in possession of the camp, was so excessive that she actually forgot to inquire after her rival's health. Environed, as she felt herself to be, by allies, and conscious of the presence of Mr. Josceline, she made for once a resolute stand against the common tyrant.

'Indeed, Mrs. Armytage, we have all set our hearts upon being on the very top of the hill.'

'I don't know as to that,' was the grim reply; 'but I know who has set her heart upon being at the top of the tree. I am

sure this is a much pleasanter spot. However, the point is,' concluded Mrs. Armytage, more mildly, perceiving public feeling to be against her proposition, 'am I, as an invalid, to be asked to sacrifice my health, perhaps my life, to a mere caprice? Of course I am not. We can picnic here in the shelter, and then any one that likes to climb up higher afterwards can do so.' Then, arranging her garments with the decent dignity of a female Cæsar, she plumped herself down opposite a pigeon pie.

In a dispute there is nothing like action; passion is not to be compared to it for one moment; and the spectacle of Mrs. Armytage, seated, and evidently about to begin operations on the provisions, decided the waverers, who were also eager for lunch, in her favour. Mrs. Jennynge, feeling that she had lost the battle, relieved her feelings by making an apology to Mr. Josceline, in whispered tones, for the behaviour of her enemy.

'All of us at the *Ultramarine* are used to Mrs. Armytage's ways,' she said; 'but to a stranger they must appear very extraordinary.'

Mr. Josceline answered with a smile, which also did duty for the acceptance of the offer of a seat tolerably clear of brambles, which Mrs. Armytage had made him by her side. Mrs. Jennynge promptly took up her position on the other side of him—for was it not her duty to protect him against that 'terrible woman' all she could?—and the rest of the company arranged themselves mechanically, after much the same manner as they sat at the *table-d'hôte*; only they had no chairs, which to some of them made a considerable difference.

'I call it most idiotic,' murmured Mr. Aird, 'this coming up a hill in the heat to graze, instead of taking our luncheon comfortably.'

'Still, you have an advantage over some of us,' observed Mrs. Wallace, laughing, and with a glance at the old Indian's spare figure; 'you can sit down on a flat place.'

'Yes, but if there's no flat place? There are nettles here, and roots, and sharp things,' he answered, testily. 'One needs to be a camp-stool, and fold up, to accommodate oneself to such circumstances.'

'At all events, it's much better than it would be at the top of the hill,' argued Mrs. Armytage.

'You mean it would be worse there than here, ma'am? I deny it. It's hotter here than it was at Bundelcumbad.'

'I thought Bundelcumbad was such a nice place,' returned the lady, sarcastically; 'you always say it was so much nicer than any place in England.'

'I only said so of its society, madam. There, if I haven't been sitting on a flint-stone, edgeways!'

'Which accounts for the sharpness of your rejoinder,' observed Vernon. 'How do you know that the Professor will not discover it to be an ancient flint instrument—it's just the place for it—showing unmistakably the action of fire?'

'It's just the place for *that*,' grumbled Mr. Aird. 'There's

not a breath of air. Phew!' and he wiped his forehead with a magnificent bandanna.

'It always struck me,' said the Professor, 'that the ancient Romans, taking their meals as they did, supine, and resting on one elbow, must have suffered a good deal from dyspepsia.'

'Which should make us forgive them much,' remarked Vernon. 'For the heinous crime of having invented the Latin language, for one thing. What do you say, Davey?'

'I like it,' answered the boy; 'I think it's capital.'

'Davey has not begun Latin yet,' said Mr. Aird, hastily: 'that will all come in due time; he thought you referred to the picnic. So you like it, do you, my child?' he continued, softly. 'The pure air and the sunshine, eh? Yes; it's very nice.'

'He said there was no air a moment ago,' muttered Mrs. Armytage, scornfully. 'He sees everything through that child's eyes.'

'A very rose-coloured medium, at all events,' observed Mr. Josceline, who perceived that Mr. Aird had overheard her; 'I wish I saw everything through *my* child's eyes.'

'Only Miss Josceline's are not rose-coloured,' observed Felspar, smiling. 'I beg her pardon, but, as a painter and on a question of tint, I must be allowed to express that opinion.'

'If Felspar is so brilliant after one glass of champagne, what will he be when he has finished lunch?' remarked Vernon, drily. 'One moment, Miss Josceline; don't move, I beg.'

He stooped forward, and, seizing something which she had not noticed on her foot, threw it into the air and out of sight.

'Lor! what was that? A bramble—a "follower," as we call it in Devonshire!' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace, to whose tongue the unaccustomed champagne had perhaps given some tillip. 'Well; I am sure I don't wonder at its having occurred to *her*. In my country it's thought to be an omen of good fortune, or what young ladies think to be so.'

'That last limitation of your wife's is not very complimentary to you, Wallace,' observed Mr. Aird, whose son's enjoyment of the feast had put in high good humour.

'But I don't believe it was a follower, as you call it, at all,' observed Mrs. Jennynge; 'I believe it was a snake.'

'A snake!' exclaimed Mr. Aird, with horror, jumping to his feet and clasping his boy in his arms.

'No, no; it was only a blindworm,' said Mr. Vernon. 'I threw it away because I thought it might frighten the ladies. My dear Aird, one would really think it had been a boa constrictor.'

'I *said* it was a likely spot for *Ophidia*,' remarked the Professor, quietly. 'If any one gets bitten, I should like to see the effect of *Curare*. I've got a little bottle of it at the hotel.'

'Come along, Davey; I'll take your plate and things to the top of the hill!' exclaimed Mr. Aird, suiting the action to the

word. 'If the Professor likes to sacrifice himself in the cause of science, let him; *you* shall not be its victim.'

'Did you ever see any one behave so ridiculously?' observed Mrs. Armytage to Mr. Josceline.

'Well, really, madam, I don't know,' returned that gentleman; 'if there are snakes about, I don't consider them a good substitute, even at a picnic, for soup or fish. What do you say, Mr. Felspar?'

'I think we had better go,' said Felspar, decisively.

'I shall stay where I am,' said Mrs. Armytage, with equal firmness.

There was a moment of general hesitation; the influence of authority was very great, but in the end that of fear prevailed. In five minutes the whole party had shifted their quarters to the summit of the Danecliff, except the Professor and his wife. That lady had made a great mistake in putting her supremacy to a test so crucial, but, having made it, she stuck to her colours: to have gone with the rest—to sink from generalissimo to camp-follower—would have been humiliation indeed.

'I am really very sorry,' said Ella, 'that Mrs. Armytage should have been left behind; it seems like deserting her.'

'She is not "left out in the cold," at all events,' observed Mr. Aird. 'Gad! one couldn't breathe down there.'

'She thoroughly deserves it for her obstinacy,' remarked Mrs. Jennynge, uncompromisingly. 'She was really afraid of snakes, for I saw her tuck her feet up and sitting all in a hunch as we came away: only she wouldn't own that she was wrong in having counter-ordered my directions. I confess I am only sorry for the poor Professor.'

'Oh, *he* won't hurt,' said Mr. Felspar, reassuringly. 'He will adopt some scientific means of defence against reptiles; set fire to the grass all round him, probably.'

'That will be nice for Mrs. Armytage,' remarked Miss Jennynge, acidly.

'And will make it ever so much warmer,' put in Mr. Aird.

'There will be salamanders as well as snakes there presently,' suggested Felspar.

I am afraid there was a great deal of laughter at the dethroned lady's expense, and very little sympathy expressed for her except by Ella, who again said, 'I am very sorry.'

There was no doubt that the change of locality was a great improvement. The view was magnificent; and after the viands were disposed of, the two young ladies produced their sketch-books, and, under Mr. Felspar's direction, proceeded to transfer the coast-guard station to paper. No doubt it was because Ella was but a beginner that he gave so much more of his attention to her work than to that of her fair companion; but, though he encouraged her, he was very far from flattering her performance.

'You will want a good deal of teaching,' he said; at which



Miss Jennynge threw up her head like a horse champing (though, of course, without so much noise), and remarked satirically: 'I am sure she will have a very attentive tutor.'

'I am glad to have so good a character from my last place,' rejoined Felspar, drily. 'But you must not imagine, Miss Jennynge, that you are in need of no further instruction.'

'You are very complimentary, I'm sure, sir,' returned the young lady, in that incisive tone which in the female indicates the presence of 'temper.'

'Indeed, I only meant that my poor services would be always at your disposal,' said Felspar, in conciliation. But poor Ella felt very uncomfortable at this exhibition of feeling on the part of her young friend, and much hotter even than she had been in the fosse. It could not be that Miss Jennynge was seriously jealous of the painter's attention to her new acquaintance, since she herself thought as little of painters (matrimonially speaking) as of glaziers; but she had inherited from her mother an extreme objection to playing, in any orchestra whatsoever, the second fiddle. She had grown so stiff and cold that it needed an artistic touch on the part of Mr. Felspar to what he pleasantly termed 'restore animation.' 'It seems to me, Miss Jennynge,' he said, with a critical eye upon her landscape, 'that you are best in distance.'

Ella, who noticed the double sense of the compliment, grew hotter than ever; partly with annoyance at Mr. Felspar, partly with apprehension of the effects of such a remark upon her fellow-pupil. She did not take into account the force of the vanity of art combined with that of nature—the weight of Pelion piled on Ossa.

'Do you really think so?' said Anastasia, with a pleased purr. 'Singularity enough, Miss Josceline made a similar remark upon my drawing this very morning.'

'That shows she has good judgment, though she is deficient in perspective,' said Felspar, coolly. 'Her weak point is your strong one. You young ladies will never be rivals in landscape drawing.'

'That is quite true,' said Ella, laughing, 'though I don't think Miss Jennynge will thank you for such a superfluous piece of consolation.'

'I am sure,' said the delineator of 'distance,' graciously, 'that after a lesson or two—that is, I mean when you have enjoyed the same advantages as myself—you will be quite as clever at it, except, perhaps, as to the sky line, as I am.'

'Yes; you are not good at sky line, Miss Josceline,' said Felspar, gravely, 'but you will do very well at figure drawing. Those little people in the foreground are first-rate. You must go in for that; we'll get some noble model to draw from. There's the Professor yonder, come up from the ditch for a breath of fresh air: draw *him*.'

'By-the-bye, where's Mr. Vernon?' exclaimed Miss Jennynge.

'I'll tell him you said "by-the-bye,"' said Felspar, 'in connection with "a noble model." I don't know anything more



likely to please him. He is very proud of his figure, I can tell you.'

'You have not, however, told us what has become of him,' said Ella, anxiously, her quick ear perceiving at once the difference between badinage and evasion. 'I noticed he was looking very pale just now; is he unwell?'

'No, no; that is, he is not quite well. The heat of the fosse, I fancy, affected him.'

'You are deceiving us, Mr. Felspar,' said Ella, putting down her sketch-book; 'it was not the heat. I suspected it from the very first, though he concealed it so courageously. That was an adder he took up, and it has bitten him.'

'Oh, la; I hope not!' exclaimed Miss Jennynge, with a pretty little shudder.

'Well, yes; it *was* an adder,' said Felspar, reluctantly; 'I knew it at the time, but he particularly told me to say nothing about it; and if I had not insisted upon his going to the doctor's to be looked to, he would have been here now. Old Cooper has set him to rights by this time, you may depend upon it. He will be dreadfully annoyed if any fuss is made.'

But Ella had already risen. 'Papa,' she exclaimed, 'Mr. Vernon has been bitten by the adder that he took off my boot, and has gone home ill!'

At this, Mr. Josceline, who was paying his attentions to Mrs. Jennynge, withdrew them, though scarcely with such promptitude as the occasion would seem to demand.

'Dear me, Ella; you don't say so?'

'How shocking!' ejaculated Mrs. Jennynge; 'why, the piece will have to be cut out, and then burnt with a hot iron, won't it?'

'It would be no use burning the piece,' said Felspar, grimly.

'How unfeeling you are, Mr. Felspar!' cried Miss Jennynge, reprovingly. She did not understand that it was disgust at the selfishness of her mother's remark, not want of sympathy with his friend, that had evoked his scorn.

'But if something of that kind is not done,' pursued the old lady, 'he'll go mad, won't he?'

'Yes,' said Felspar; 'when he comes to the *table-d'hôte* and barks, it will be a sign that he is dangerous.'

'Yes, yes; I see all that,' said Mr. Josceline, to whom his daughter had meantime been speaking in low but earnest tones: 'of course, he was very kind; but I'm hanged if I can see how I can help him, unless I suck the place, like Queen Eleanor.'

'I assure you it's quite unnecessary that you should leave us,' said Mrs. Jennynge, annoyed at the prospect of losing her cavalier.

'If you don't go, papa,' whispered Ella into her father's astonished ear, 'I shall go myself.'

For one instant a frown like night came over Mr. Josceline's face. Then he answered lightly, 'Very well, dear; since you think it is the right thing to do, I'll go at once.'

And he went.

'I hope no one else will go,' said Felspar, quietly, 'because I know it will annoy Vernon. If it had not been for that, I should myself, I hope, have been the first to go.'

He said this in so low a tone that it would almost seem to be intended for Ella's ear rather than for a public apology for his conduct, then added cheerfully, 'Come, let us go on with our drawing-lesson.'

Miss Jennynge dutifully resumed her sketch-book, but Ella drew no more: she said her fingers shook, which, indeed, they did (though not from cold), as Felspar perceived. He thought some people—those who got bitten by snakes, for instance—had great luck. Presently, seeing Ella unoccupied, little Davey stole down to her from his father's side, and slipped his hand into hers.

'Papa says I must not go to Mr. Vernon,' he whispered, 'because Mrs. Jennynge says he'll bite. But I don't think he'd bite *me*. I'm very sorry he's hurt; ain't you?'

Ella did not answer him directly; but she put her arm round his neck and kissed him. 'You are a good, dear child,' she said. Felspar, who saw the action, though he did not hear the words, thought that some boys, too, had great luck.

Then, after an hour or so, dashed with melancholy caused by Vernon's misfortune, and which, after the fun of the picnic, seemed somewhat of the nature of a bathos, the party returned to the hotel, whither the Professor and his wife had already preceded them.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A COUPLE OF PATIENTS.

DR. COOPER'S house, though situated in the High Street of Wallington, was, to some eyes that from time to time beheld it, quite an ideal place of residence. It was small and low, but eminently comfortable, and, being of ancient red brick and overgrown with creepers, had a most picturesque appearance. The two bow windows of what the Doctor called his parlour and his study—which were also his dining-room and drawing-room—looked out upon an old-fashioned flower-garden, which, all the summer through, smelt more deliciously than the finest scent-shop in Bond Street. At one end of it was a sort of temple, set on a little hill, dedicated to the divine weed, where after his day's work was done, the good Esculapius would sit and smoke, with his eyes on the Ocean and his thoughts on the Infinite—or sometimes only on his longest cases. His best cures, he was wont to say, were wrought out in this place of retirement. His visits to patients were brief, and his way with them so prompt and decisive that, to strangers, and especially to those who had little the matter with them, he appeared curt and careless; whereas he was, in fact, the most

painstaking of physicians. How he lived—though it was in homely fashion—was a wonder to many, for his practice lay chiefly among the poor, to whom he was known at least as much as an almsgiver as a medical adviser. When remonstrated with by his friends upon a charity so out of all proportion to his means, he would argue that he gave nothing but professional assistance; ‘it is not the drugs from my dispensary,’ he would say, ‘of which the good people are in need, but beef from my larder and soup from my kitchen; it is no use my ordering them port wine, don’t you see, unless I send them a bottle.’

I sometimes think that in heaven there will be a particularly pleasant spot set aside for good doctors; and, if I am right, John Cooper of Wallington will have one of the snuggest corners there. On earth, from the circumstance of his blunt manners and the use of a strong provincial dialect, he was not appreciated generally by the upper classes until they had found the value of his services. And he was so absurdly conscientious that, if they only fancied they needed them, he was wont to tell them so. Otherwise he would have made a much better income out of society generally, and of the hotel company in particular, among whom there were often hypochondriacs, and those professional invalids who to the doctor are what litigious people are to the lawyer. Moreover, when called in to a serious case, but one in which he knew medicine would not avail, instead of trying interesting experiments, which expand the purse if not the mind, he would frankly say, ‘I can do nothing for you.’ Such a case he had had under his charge for four-and-twenty hours quite recently; and his payment—a voluntary one—had been unusually large; viz. a five-pound note and this remark, delivered with a sigh, ‘Dr. Cooper, you are an honest man, I fear.’

This was true, yet the Doctor had his weaknesses. He was an amateur mathematician, and had constructed a system of logarithms, which did not take much more than double the time for computation than was expended in the usual method; he had even the reputation of ‘corresponding with Le Verrier,’ though his enemies asserted that the correspondence had consisted in his having addressed one letter to the astronomer to which the latter had not replied.

On the day of the picnic the Doctor was enjoying an after-dinner pipe in his bower when he beheld Vernon coming up to him through the garden. The young man often dropped in for a chat in the evening ‘to suck his brains,’ as the host averred, and certainly some of the Doctor’s experiences had afterwards appeared (well disguised and with his full consent) in print; but the young man was, indeed, a great favourite with him, and brought with him at least as much as he took away. A visit from him so early in the day was, however, unusual; and the Doctor perceived at once that something was amiss, though he affected simplicity.

‘Oh, come ye for peace here, or come ye for war?’ he quoted,

gaily; 'do I behold a friend, or a wretch in quest of literary copy?'

'Neither, my good sir; nor yet "to dance at your bridal,"' replied the young man, concluding the quotation, 'though I hope to do that some day.' ['An impudent young dog,' muttered the Doctor.] 'I am come for your professional advice.'

'Is it the heartache?'

'No; the fact is I have been bitten in the hand.'

'By a dog!' exclaimed the Doctor, speaking quickly, but quietly, and rising from his seat for the first time.

'No; by a viper; it came uninvited to our picnic on the Dane-cliff, and when I picked it up to throw it away it did this'—and he exhibited his wounded hand, which had already begun to swell.

'Um; fingers were made before forks it is true, but they are not so long. If I had been you, I should have taken that viper up with a salad fork.'

'There was no time; the reptile was crawling on a young lady's foot.'

The Doctor executed a soft but prolonged whistle. 'Then I was right,' he said, 'as I generally am, in my first diagnosis; both hand *and* heart are affected. You shake your head, which goes for nothing; and you turn very red, which is a most significant symptom. Now let me look at the hand.'

They were in the surgery by this time, which was at the back of the house, and the Doctor at once commenced his ministrations.

'If you had been a child, this might have been dangerous,' he observed; 'but grown-up persons are seldom much hurt by these things. It will cripple you for a day or two for all that, if I am not mistaken.'

'Confound it! and I have to write some verses within twenty-four hours for a magazine.'

'Dictate 'em to the young lady that bit you—I mean who was the cause of your being bitten. Make 'em very tender; heart, smart; love, dove; mine, thine. That will give you a capital opportunity; and will also put to shame the people who found their arguments against the benevolence of the scheme of creation upon the fact that the viper is harmful and of no use.'

'I have found it very useful professionally,' said Vernon, gravely. 'As a metaphor for a villain it is invaluable. If he is also a mathematician,' he added sily, 'I use a synonym, and call him an adder.'

The surgeon laughed, and, as was his custom, so uproariously, that a polite knock at the door escaped the notice of both doctor and patient. The next moment Mr. Josceline entered the room.

'I beg your pardon, Dr. Cooper, but the servant-girl told me to walk in. I came to inquire after a sick friend, and am delighted to find him laughing, like Mother Hubbard's dog in the ballad.'



'It was *my* laugh,' said the Doctor, somewhat disconcerted, and conscious, doubtless, that a guffaw was scarcely a professional incident in a surgical operation. 'The fact is, our young friend here is a little depressed by his misfortune; thinks a snake-bite likely to produce hydrophobia—now, my good sir,' this to Vernon, who was about to enter his protest against so atrocious a misrepresentation, 'you mustn't excite yourself, or you'll have lock-jaw.'

For a moment Mr. Josceline looked puzzled, but in the next he was in full possession of the state of affairs. The rough humour of the Doctor was as foreign to any mental attribute of his own as were the high spirits of Vernon; but he could understand them both.

'I suppose,' he said, in the philosophic tone he could adopt with the same ease as another would use a toothpick, 'you find in sickness even more than in health that "a merry heart goes all the way, while a sad one tires in a mile-a-"'

'That is certainly my experience, Mr. Josceline,' returned the Doctor; for, though he had never spoken to his visitor before, the latter was already known by report to every one in Wallington. 'Tis a light heart that makes a good patient; but I hope our young friend here will not have to draw much upon his resources in the way of liveliness to get over this bout. To the adult, as I was telling him, the bite of the viper is not very formidable.'

'I am, nevertheless, greatly obliged to him for having, to his own damage, rescued my daughter from such a calamity,' said Mr. Josceline, warmly. 'Without making too much of it, which I am sure he would not wish me to do, I must needs say it was an unselfish act, very promptly and opportunely done. I thank him for it in my daughter's name, as well as my own.'

There was little to be found fault with in Mr. Josceline's words, albeit they did not quite give the impression of being extempore, while the manner of speaking them was perfection. But it did not escape Vernon's notice that they were addressed to him somewhat indirectly and in the presence of a third person. To his sensitive mind this seemed to imply that Mr. Josceline was inclined to make the obligation referred to as little private and personal as possible.

'You are quite right, Mr. Josceline,' he replied, gravely, 'in thinking I did not wish to make much of what I did; nor was there in the service itself anything worthy of remark, since any one in my place must needs have performed it. I hope you will not think it necessary to further allude to it.'

'One would really think our young friend was Mithridates, King of Pontus,' observed Mr. Josceline, gaily, 'so lightly does he seem to hold being poisoned.'

'He doesn't make such a fuss about it as Cleopatra, certainly,' remarked the Doctor, drily; 'but an adder's fang is not to be trifled with, and the sooner he gets home and lies up a bit the



better—and you will wear that sling, young man, till further orders.'

As Vernon rose to go, 'You must give me your left hand,' said Mr. Josceline, kindly, 'though you can't give me your right. Both my daughter and I will do ourselves the pleasure of calling on you to-morrow to make inquiries.'

A flush of pleasure came over the young man's face in spite of his effort to appear unmoved.

'I am sure that is not necessary, Mr. Josceline,' he said, 'though such a visit would, indeed, be welcome, however undeserved. There are some of Mr. Felspar's paintings, however, at our lodgings, which, since Miss Josceline is herself an artist, may, perhaps, repay her for her trouble.'

The allusion was unfortunate, as we, who are in possession of Mr. Josceline's views of his daughter's taste for art, are well aware; but the man of the world merely smiled acquiescence, and bade adieu to his young acquaintance with much graciousness and warmth. The resentment Vernon had shown in the first instance had, curiously enough, made a favourable impression on Mr. Josceline; he was glad to find that the young fellow had some pride of his own, for he knew it was easier to deal with such a man in relation to his affections (and his admiration of Ella had not escaped her father's eye) than with those who agree with the Scripture that 'before honour is humility.'

'I hope there is really nothing to fear with regard to Mr. Vernon,' said Mr. Josceline, as soon as the patient had left the room.

'I think I may honestly say nothing,' replied the Doctor, to whom it seemed natural enough, though kind withal, that the other should have remained behind to ask the question. 'It is a great point in his favour, as you were saying, that he is not of the melancholy sort. Now, I've got a patient—not a hundred miles away—who, if his great toe aches, thinks not only that he is going to die of it, but that the world is going to fall to pieces.'

'His name begins with an E, does it not?' observed Mr. Josceline, smiling.

'Well, yes,' answered the Doctor, somewhat repenting of his particularity, for it was contrary to his habit to eke out his remarks, as only too many doctors do, by illustrations drawn from his own practice; 'but how is it possible that you, who are a stranger here, should have guessed that?'

'Oh, I know Mr. Edward, at least by reputation,' said Mr. Josceline. 'I notice, by-the-bye, that about here they call him Edwards!'

'Which would drive him frantic if he knew it,' laughed the Doctor; 'fortunately, however, he never hears what folks say.'

'Just so; he lives the life of a recluse, does he not?'

'Absolutely; he sees no one in the neighbourhood except myself, nor even me save when he imagines himself (which, how-

ever, is pretty often) at the point of death. At ordinary times, when I am sent for, I am interviewed by his secretary, who details his highness's symptoms as if they were his own, and I prescribe for them accordingly.'

'Do you not think he is touched in his head?' inquired Mr. Josceline, carelessly.

The Doctor shrugged his shoulders. 'As he is a rich man, one must call him "peculiar" or "eccentric"; if he were a poor man—well, between ourselves, I think he would be put into the County Lunatic Asylum.'

'It is fortunate for him that he has no relatives to put him in a private madhouse,' observed Mr. Josceline, with unwonted grimness.

'That is not *his* opinion,' said the Doctor, drily, who, having been betrayed into frankness by the other's seeming acquaintance with the subject in question, now once more seemed inclined to draw in his horns.

'Just so; that he has not been blessed by children seems to him, I dare say, not so much a private calamity,' continued the other, 'as a public misfortune.'

'I see you know all about it,' answered the Doctor, in a tone that seemed to imply, 'and since you do so, there is nothing more to tell.'

'But do you mean to say, Doctor,' pursued Mr. Josceline, 'that our friend up at the castle yonder'—and he threw his hand out in the direction of Barton—'does actually see no one but his secretary and yourself?'

'No other man, as I believe.'

There was a long pause, which the Doctor did not seem at all inclined to break; he felt that he had made a mistake in speaking of the private affairs of a patient, and especially of one who was solicitous to keep them private.

'And does this seclusion apply also, Doctor, to the other sex?'

'To tell you the truth, Mr. Josceline, I don't feel at liberty to give you any more information upon the subject, unless you can assure me that you have some reason beyond mere curiosity for inquiring into it.'

'The question I have just put, Doctor, shall be my last one,' returned the other, earnestly; 'and I give you my word of honour that, whatever your reply may be, it shall never be repeated to any human being.'

'Well, then, there is a lady at the castle who enjoys Mr. Edward's complete confidence. I should add,' he continued, gravely—for a mocking and contemptuous smile had suddenly distorted Mr. Josceline's aristocratic features—'that not a breath of scandal attaches to Miss Burt's position in that gentleman's household. She is, I am convinced, an excellent good woman, though she has suffered, I have every reason to believe, some

severe misfortune, the nature of which I cannot guess, but which, I will venture to assert, has been unmerited.'

Mr. Josceline waved his hand in token of assent, but his face darkened, and its expression became curiously hard and set.

'You must excuse my earnestness,' continued the Doctor, 'but I respect Miss Burt, and appreciate the delicate position in which she is necessarily placed; and as to Mr. Edward himself, I feel that where a man—though it may be through his own fault—has so many circumstances against him, and which tend to foster gossip and scandal, it is one's duty to put him right with others, where one can—Drink this at once; the whole of it!'

While the Doctor had been speaking he had moved, still keeping his eye fixed on his companion, to a cupboard behind him, from which he produced a bottle of brandy and a wine-glass, which he filled to the brim.

'Don't speak; that's well; your colour is coming back again.'

'I am dying; I suffocate,' moaned the other; his lips were blue; his hands were pressed tightly to his side; his face depicted the throes of some inward agony.

'On the contrary, you are getting better.'

'If that breast-pang is to come again, I had rather die,' murmured Mr. Josceline.

'It will not come again,' answered the Doctor, quietly; 'at least not now,' he added with conscientious reluctance. 'You have had it before, I conclude?'

Mr. Josceline moved his head in assent. There was a silence for a little, and then the patient began to smile pleasantly, but very feebly, like a wintry sun.

'What poor creatures we are, Doctor, when anything goes wrong with this complicated mechanism of ours! I feel that I have made a most distressing exhibition of myself. The sight of that adder—so near my dear Ella—gave me a turn, and perhaps I came down the hill quicker than was necessary; and, you see, my heart is weak. Pray forgive me.'

The Doctor regarded him with gravity. Mr. Josceline reminded him of Lord Chesterfield *in extremis* with his 'Give Dayrelles a chair,' and his honest nature resented such politeness as out of place.

'It is my duty,' said he, earnestly, 'to tell you that you will require great care, Mr. Josceline; very great care. I can do little for you; but you must avoid excitement of all kinds, or we shall have a repetition of this scene which has distressed you so much.'

'It was touch and go, Doctor, was it?' inquired the other, with a seriousness as strangely foreign to the phrase, as the phrase itself was to the speaker's usual manner of expressing himself.

'Yes; if you put it that way, it was almost "go!"'

'Poor Ella!'

Mr. Josceline's voice was full of pathos. To one who knew

him well it was difficult to believe that he could have uttered such words and in such a tone. Presently he spoke again.

'You will say nothing of this unpleasant incident, I feel sure, Doctor; I have never been mistaken yet—to use a phrase from your own profession—in my diagnosis of a gentleman.'

'The term is very vague,' returned the other smiling; 'but you may trust me so far. The secrets of the consulting-room are as the secrets of the confessional. You must not think because I spoke so openly of Mr. Edward and of Miss Burt (who, indeed, is no patient of mine) that I am given to gossip—I'll just open the window; that's well; now you look yourself again.'

For a moment Mr. Josceline had not looked himself, nor anything like it. The Doctor's practised eye had detected certain premonitory symptoms of a second attack; but these, again, had passed away. 'Half a glass more of this will do you no harm; unless, indeed, you are unused to alcohol.'

'I have drunk like a fish in my time,' replied Mr. Josceline, frankly.

'I dare say,' was the Doctor's rejoinder, delivered in so *naïve* a tone, that the patient answered, smiling:—

'You are thinking to yourself that I have probably done everything else, in my time, that I should not have done.'

'It is my impression that you have tried your constitution pretty severely,' answered the Doctor, evasively. 'And, I warn you,' he continued, earnestly, 'that you must try it no more.'

'Indeed, I have no intention, Doctor,' sighed Mr. Josceline; 'it is such a mistake that we don't all begin life at sixty years of age. Then we should be so irreproachable.'

'I don't agree with you; many would be born misers, for one thing.'

'Let the galled jade wince; that doesn't touch *me*, I assure you, Doctor, since I was never distinguished as an economist. By-the-bye, that reminds me—what am I indebted to you for saving my life; for I well understand that you have done no less?'

'My dear sir, the glass of brandy you drank, it is true, is very old,' answered the Doctor, gravely; 'at the *Ultramarine* you would have given a shilling for it. But I am not licensed to sell spirituous liquors, and, therefore, can charge you nothing.'

'But that is Quixotic,' remonstrated Mr. Josceline; 'moreover, if I want a doctor in future, what am I to do?'

'Oh, if you send for me professionally, of which I hope there will be no need, that is another matter. Then it will be "Charge, Chester, charge," with a vengeance. Good-bye, my dear sir, and take care of yourself.'

'A very serious case, that,' murmured the Doctor, when the other had departed. 'It must have been no ordinary matter that so moved him; the attack took place, too, when he was apparently quite calm. Sixty years of age? No; he has not seen fifty, and I very much doubt,' he added, with a drop in his voice, 'if he ever will see it.'

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A SUGGESTION.

THE position of a bore in society is not so fixed as it is commonly supposed to be. He is by no means generally disliked, or it would be impossible that he should be so universally tolerated. The fact is, dull people, of whom there is a fair sprinkling in the world, are not so annoyed by him as they pretend to be, and have, secretly, a fellow-feeling for him. Bores, indeed, remind me of nothing so much as organ-grinders, who, though abused on all hands, are, in fact, looked upon with disfavour by only a few unfortunates with delicate nerves, on whom their grinding has the effect of slow torture. There are some circumstances, however,—when, for example, they are suffering from severe calamities or physical pain,—in which even the most commonplace and conventional of men resent the attentions of a bore as though they were pests; and the same thing takes place with those men of the world who pride themselves most upon their external civility to this class of parasite; when they arehipped and out of sorts their patience gives way, and they can be as rude as anybody—or ruder. Thus it happened to Mr. Josceline himself, when, on leaving the Doctor's house with his mind full of many things, and none of them pleasant, and with his body by no means in a satisfactory condition, he found himself suddenly in the society of Mrs. Armytage. She had gone into the village to make some little purchases, and was returning to the hotel alone when the good fortune occurred to her of meeting the very companion she most desired.

'Well, this *is* pleasant!' she exclaimed, 'and the more so because so unexpected. I do hope you took no hurt, my dear Mr. Josceline, from that imprudent adjournment to the top of the Danecliff. You are not strong, you know, and really you look far from well. I believe you feel a cold coming.'

Mr. Josceline felt worse things than colds coming. The warning he had just received had been of a most serious and unmistakable kind, and it was not the first. In spite of himself and of all his usual habits and modes of thought, he had been brought suddenly face to face with a certain ghastly reality, which, sooner or later, obtrudes itself on the attention of gentlemen of the highest fashion.

When an earthquake has taken place close to one's feet, and another shock is imminent, the buzzing of a bottle fly in one's ear is of no account; yet, if it settles on one's nose, one must do something. Mr. Josceline made at first some polite and mechanical rejoinder to Mrs. Armytage's tittle-tattle; but her 'weak,



washy, everlasting flood' of words was, in the end, too much for him.

'Anybody can see you are not well, Mr. Josceline; much more one who, like myself, has some powers of observation; and who also, I may be allowed to say, takes a personal interest in your welfare. To sit down on the top of that hill, of all places in the world, to dine, was really an act of madness. If you had stopped in the hollow, as I suggested——'

'Do you know what happened, madam, through your choice of that situation?' interrupted Mr. Josceline, gravely. 'Mr. Vernon has been bitten by a snake.'

'Dear me! You don't say so! Why, I heard him with my own ears say it was a blindworm.'

'That was because he did not wish to alarm you ladies; he was bitten very badly, and Dr. Cooper has just dressed the wound.'

'I don't think much of Dr. Cooper,' replied the lady. 'I dare say he has never so much as heard of such a remedy, but a little olive oil, with wool to exclude the air, is a sovereign remedy for snake-bites.'

'Then, for Heaven's sake, madam, go to Mr. Vernon and tell him so. I think, under the circumstances, he has a right to expect it.'

'Do you really?' replied the lady, doubtfully. 'If *you* are not a judge of what is right, dear Mr. Josceline, I don't know who can be qualified; and though I am scarcely on visiting terms with the young gentleman'—here she drew herself up, as if by that movement she would have indicated her superior position in the social scale—'rather than fall short in such a matter, I will take the oil to him myself.'

'Then you will very literally be a Good Samaritan,' said Mr. Josceline.

He got rid of her with a smile and a bow, and she parted from him with the same symbols of courtesy. But the one never knew how very near the edge of a volcano she had been treading, while the other was equally unconscious of danger, through having underrated the intelligence, or rather the susceptibilities, of his late companion.

Mrs. Armytage could see when she was not wanted (when she chose to see it) as well as another; and though she had departed upon an errand of charity, her feelings were scarcely in consonance with it. If Mr. Josceline had not been a sprig of nobility, she would have let him know what she thought of his conduct; but, as it was, he hung too high. With the commonalty in almost open revolt against her sway, she could not afford to quarrel with a personage so exalted; and, indeed, in order to show how far from quarrel were her thoughts, she sent Mr. Josceline a present, or rather a token of her solicitude, that very afternoon.

He was in his room alone, having placed his daughter, when he left the Danecliff, in the care of Mrs. Jennynge, who, contrary to Ella's wishes (for she was naturally anxious to hear of Mr. Vernon), had, after their return to the hotel, taken her out for a walk in company with Anastasia; so that he was quite alone when Mrs. Armytage's own maid came in with her mistress's compliments, and one of the very hottest linseed poultices that had ever been seen so far from the fire. The cook, she said, had forgotten to send it on the previous day, but Mrs. Armytage hoped and trusted it would still be found useful.

'You may put it down,' was the very mitigated expression of thanks with which Mr. Josceline received it; and, on the hand-maiden's departure, I am sorry to be obliged to add, that, with an ejaculation which nothing but the state of his health could have excused, the invalid dropped it out of window. Nor was even this the worst of it; for Mrs. Armytage's Fido happening to be upon the grass-plot beneath, in search of unconsidered trifles, he snapped the poultice up without having taken the precaution to blow upon it, or having the patience to let it cool, whereupon arose such howls of agony as brought out the whole establishment of the hotel. As the plate, however, had not been thrown out, and poor Fido could not explain the nature of his malady, he was treated for fits.

Under other circumstances, such a catastrophe could not have failed to be agreeable to one with so strong a sense of humour as Mr. Josceline, but that gentleman, as may well be imagined, was in no mood for mirth. Though he was far from thinking with the French nobleman that the Creator would 'think twice before d——ing a person of his quality,' the Hon. George Emilius Josceline had no vulgar fears of death, but he had fears of what might happen afterwards—to somebody else. The picture of his Ella, friendless, fortuneless, and forlorn, presented itself to his mind in sombre but distinct colours. It had, as we know, occurred to him before, but never with such sharpness of outline. To do him justice, though he entertained some vague thoughts of reparation, he had none of absolution; it did not strike him that by any sacrifice of self at this, the fag end of a wasted existence, he might benefit his own soul. If he was destitute of the religious sense, he was also free from the inconsistent egotism that too often accompanies it. He had lived for Self, it is true, throughout his life; but, for once, Love had vanquished Self. He was like a man who, conscious that his time is short, but with no anxiety for his spiritual concerns, makes haste to make his will. Only, in his case, though so solicitous to make provision for another, there was nothing to leave; it was, however, possible, if time were given to him, to make, as it were, a deed of gift; to bestow something upon the beloved object in his lifetime that might be of service to her after his own departure. It was no wonder that he was full of thought; and what made the matter still more grave was,

that, notwithstanding its pressing character, it was absolutely necessary for him to conceal its urgency from all concerned, and from Ella most of all. If she should once grasp the real condition of affairs, her father well understood that she would be constituting herself the nurse and devoted companion of a sick man; whereas he had quite other views both for her and the patient in question.

After an hour or two of solitude, during which he sat at the open window, gazing out on sky and sea, the beauty of which, perhaps, mingled with his thoughts and influenced them in a manner he little suspected, he arrived at a certain conclusion; not a very good one, nor perhaps, albeit it had paternal love for its basis, even a high-principled one, but, nevertheless, such as seemed to him feasible and sufficient. By the time Ella returned he had, to all outward appearance, recovered himself, as was clear from her at once addressing him with respect to the health of another.

‘Well, papa; how is Mr. Vernon? Mrs. Jennynge walks so slowly that I thought we should never have got home, and all the time I was torturing myself with the notion that he might be very ill.’

‘No, no; there is very little the matter, though I thought it civil to say we would call and inquire after him to-morrow; a slight swelling of the hand, and a little pain, which the Doctor assures me will abate to-morrow. There was no occasion to distress yourself; I hope you did not evince any impatience of the society of your companions.’

‘I hope not, indeed, papa; Mrs. Jennynge was very kind to me, though I am not so conceited as to suppose it was for my own sake. You have no idea how she was singing your praises.’

‘She is a woman of excellent judgment,’ returned Mr. Josceline, smiling; ‘and her daughter? Did she join in the chorus?’

‘Well, she was not so enthusiastic as her mamma, of course. That would not have been what that lady would have called *comme il faut*, or in accordance with *les convenances*.’

It was with a very good-natured laugh that Ella thus alluded to Mrs. Jennynge’s weakness for the French tongue, but Mr. Josceline did not echo it; nay, it was even with a slight air of reproof that he replied, ‘She is a very kindly and well-disposed woman, Ella, and does not presume upon her wealth, as many persons would do in her position. I have reason to believe that she is very rich.’

‘Indeed!’ said Ella, indifferently; ‘I wonder, then, that the daughter—being such an heiress—should have remained unmarried so long.’

‘Yes, that is strange, for she is not bad-looking.’

‘Her style of dress is a little too fashionable, don’t you think papa?’

‘Well, it is, at all events, unsuitable for Wallington Bay.

you could give her a little friendly advice on the matter, it would be a charity. They evidently feel inclined to cultivate our acquaintance, and, though they may not be quite to our own taste, I have lived too long in the world to reject the friendly advances of honest people.'

The sentiment, no doubt, was an admirable one, yet somehow in her father's mouth it sounded strange.

'But, my dear papa, I thought to-day you rather discouraged Mrs. Armytage. And though she is rather vulgar, I do believe she is well-meaning.'

'No doubt she is, and that is a great misfortune. If such people were not well-meaning they would not be tolerated at all. I wish they would let well alone; she has just sent me a linseed poultice, which Fido has taken internally.' And he narrated the incident in a manner that amused Ella exceedingly. 'By Jingo,' he added, 'how Mr. Aird does hate that woman!'

'Yes, I am quite sorry about it; he and Davey joined us when we were out walking, and inveighed against her so that I felt obliged to be her partisan.'

'That is a piece of quite unnecessary knight-errantry,' observed Mr. Josceline, gravely. 'Mr. Aird is a better judge of human nature than you are, my dear. Underneath his somewhat rough exterior, unless I am much mistaken, are a wise head and a warm heart.'

'As to the latter, I am quite convinced of it, papa; his devotion to his boy is quite touching.'

'Yes, and when such strong affection is manifested for one object, the capabilities of it, at all events, exist for others. His lad is delicate, I fear.'

'I am afraid so, papa.'

'How came Mr. Aird to join company with you?' inquired Mr. Josceline, after a long silence, during which he appeared deep in thought. 'It did not strike me that Mrs. Jennynge was a favourite of his.'

'Well, I believe that I was the attraction—that is, of course, to Davey. The little fellow has taken quite a fancy to me, and, seeing me walking with the others, he ran up to us, and his father followed him. The two have only just left us to make inquiries at Clover Cottage.'

'And where is Clover Cottage?'

'What, have you not been there? That is where Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon live.'

'No. I saw Mr. Vernon at the Doctor's. I remember now, he told me he lived in lodgings. That must be wretched work in a place like Wallington; but, to be sure, it signifies nothing to a bachelor. The worst of it is that a man of that kind, through ignorance rather than selfishness, often imagines that what is good enough for himself is good enough for his wife.'

'But is Mr. Vernon going to be married?'



'I am sure I don't know ; I am only speaking in general terms, though, by-the-bye, I think his friend Felspar, who seems to be situated in much the same position, has an eye to Miss Jennynge. In that case, however, supposing you are right about her being an heiress, there is nothing to be said, as she will have enough for two.'

'I think, dear papa, your sagacity is for once at fault,' said Ella, quietly. 'From what I have seen of Mr. Felspar, I judge him to have too much pride to be dependent upon his wife.'

'Then all I can say is, it is false pride,' returned Mr. Josceline, dogmatically. 'As to his own ideas upon the matter, they don't concern me in the least ; but I should be sorry, my dear Ella, if you were to be misled by conventional views upon this subject. They proceed, in the first place, from the vulgar supposition that money is everything, and that there is no equivalent for it, whereas there are a great many equivalents. For example, if Mr. Felspar is a man of genius, he would give as much as he got, even though he married an heiress or even a millionairess.'

'I quite agree with you there, papa, I'm sure.'

'Of course you do ; everybody with common sense must do so. Similarly, a man of rank but of small means is not to be accused of greed if, as the phrase goes, he "marries money." What he needs, it is true, his wife is possessed of ; but also, if she is not of such good family, *vice versâ*. And it is the same with a young lady, whether of birth or beauty (and, of course, this is still more the case when she is possessed of both), who marries a rich man older than herself. The disparity in years is fully made up to her by the advantages of his social position, and indeed, taking marriages all round, I am inclined to think that these are the happiest of all unions.'

It was not likely that Ella would have expressed any view of her own in antagonism to her father's experience ; but at this juncture the gong gave note of the preparation for the *table-d'hôte*, and it is certain she felt a sense of relief in obeying its summons, and escaping from the further development of his social philosophy. It was not only that his treating of such topics was a thing new and strange, but his tone and manner had an earnestness altogether foreign to his character, and such as gave the thing discoursed of a personal application which embarrassed her, she knew not why.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A CONFESSION.

WHY Clover Cottage was so called had remained a mystery even to the oldest inhabitants of Wallington until Mr. Felspar had discovered it. The Dryasdusts, of course, would have held that,



it being the most ancient dwelling-house in the place, it had originally stood in the fields and been surrounded by the herb in question. But the painter stoutly held that the herb had nothing to do with it, and that the name arose from an antique song of praise sung by generation after generation of grateful lodgers who had lived under that hospitable roof in clover. It was incontestable that the Dame was a good and liberal housewife, whatever her foremothers may have been before her, and she had a weakness for youthful lodgers of the male sex.

There is something, I cannot tell what it may be,  
 About good-looking gentlemen aged twenty-three,  
 Which affects female hearts in no common degree;  
 Ugly or pretty, stupid or witty,  
 Young or old, they experience in country or city  
 What is clearly not love, yet it's warmer than pity.

And this was the case with Mrs. Gammer, who, though Mrs. but by courtesy, was of the mature age of sixty-five, and might be supposed (by those ignorant of the subject) to have survived the tender passion. If she had had any professional rivals in the place—which she had not, for Clover Cottage was the only house that accommodated visitors—they might justly have complained that she spoilt her lodgers, and the market; and, indeed, anything in stronger contrast to the ordinary ways of landladies than *her* ways could not be imagined. Her first solicitude was to make her guests comfortable; the last idea to enter her head (indeed it never got there) would have been to take advantage of their confidence. In her personal appearance nature had made some mistakes: she should obviously have been plump and buxom and typical of plenty; whereas she was tall and spare. Her hair should have been white but plentiful, as befits elderly persons who practise philanthropy; whereas doubts were entertained (and even expressed) by her enemies whether she had any hair at all. She had, indeed, a substitute for it in a front of brown curls; but these were of such an amazing size and uncompromising rigidity, that they imposed upon no one. They no more resembled real ringlets than the stone peaches on the mantelpiece in her private parlour resembled genuine wall-fruit.

Mr. Michael Felspar had lodged with this lady for three summers; during the first she had called him 'Mr. Felspar,' during the second he had been 'Mr. Michael,' and now he was 'Mr. Mike.' Mr. Vernon had only been with her that spring; but, being a friend of Mr. Felspar's, Mrs. Gammer had grown more familiar with him earlier, and he was already 'Mr. Walter.' One would have almost thought, to have heard them talking together, that they were two brothers, and that she was their mother; and yet her familiarity was not of the sort that breeds contempt. She never forgot she was their landlady. Some very great ladies have a similar faculty of playing two rôles at once.

When Vernon came home with his arm in a sling, he knew better than to talk to this good lady of adders; she was one of those simple creatures who confuse these reptiles with rattlesnakes, and believe that a cat, if she catches you asleep, will suck your breath.

‘Good gracious, Mr. Walter, what on earth have happened?’ Then, with a sudden change from curiosity to presentiment, ‘I’ll lay my life it’s a hornet.’

‘You are always right, Mrs. Gammer,’ was his cheerful reply. ‘My head’s in a buzz as though I were still in the thick of them; so the Doctor has recommended me to lie down.’

‘But hornets don’t buzz, Mr. Walter.’

The man of letters was unacquainted with this fact of natural history; a little more experience in his craft would have taught him never to commence a fiction of a technical kind without consulting an expert. He was so young that his conscience even pricked him for deceiving a woman that had a kindness for him, and his face betrayed it.

‘Lord a mercy, don’t ye tell me it’s a mad dog!’ continued the old lady, clasping her skinny, but useful fingers.

For a single instant he felt a strong desire to bark and frisk upon the doorstep, but humanity asserted itself; he told her all like a man, with the assurance, however, that Dr. Cooper, whom she believed to be as infallible as the Pope, thought nothing of it. ‘If my blood had been in a bad state with the living at the hotel, for instance’ (this really was a pretty touch of his art), ‘I should have been ill for a week; but, as I get nothing but what is wholesome at Clover Cottage, there is nothing to be apprehended. All that is recommended to me is quiet and milk arrowroot.’

By the happy invention of this prescription, the patient procured the first panacea at once; for Mrs. Gammer left him to his own devices while she hurried off to get ready the second, for the preparation of which she flattered herself, as he well knew, she had a peculiar gift.

When Mrs. Armytage in due course arrived with her olive oil and wool, the invalid, to her great indignation, was denied to her. ‘He had already taken,’ said Mrs. Gammer, ‘what Dr. Cooper had ordered him, and was forbidden to receive company.’

‘But he will see *me*?’ insisted Mrs. Armytage.

‘Indeed, ma’am, it is impossible,’ was the dry rejoinder. ‘Mr. Walter is abed.’

It must be understood, as some mitigation of this pious fraud, that in the meanwhile Mrs. Gammer had learnt that her young favourite’s ailment had been indirectly caused by Mrs. Armytage herself, and that she thought herself justified in using any means for excluding from his presence his would-have-been assassin. Vernon was not in bed, but in the sitting-room, smoking a pipe and composing his bespoken poem upon the ‘Italian Organ Boy.’ It was a room of considerable size if you counted in its

large bow window, and, though bare of furniture, was full of miscellaneous objects connected with literature and art. Two immense tobacco jars, with sealskin and india-rubber pouches in profusion; half-a-dozen packs of cards not over clean; wax matches everywhere, not excepting on the carpet; yesterday's 'Times,' and several copies of the 'Mayfair Keepsake,' some of them with illustrations not to be found in the originals; and a silver tankard with a glass bottom. These were common to the two tenants of the apartment; but on the table of each were the tools of their respective trades; on the one, palettes, pencils, and paint-boxes; on the other, pens (some gnawed to the quick in the agonies of composition), Shelley, Keats, and a rhyming dictionary. On the wall, some book shelves pretty well filled, and a few unframed sketches, full of freshness and vigour, redeemed this somewhat Bohemian state of affairs.

Felspar, who had come home to console the invalid, was not, as usual, at his work, but sitting with his chair atilt and his arms at the back of his head, which was his attitude of reflection. His eyes were fixed on his friend with a certain tender gravity, evoked perhaps by the contemplation of the process of inspiration.

'Look here, old fellow,' he said presently; 'you don't seem to get on very well with that left hand of yours. Can't I write the thing out for you?'

'Well; I was thinking of asking you, but it seemed too like dictation.'

Felspar shut his eyes and laughed to himself, as his custom was when greatly tickled. 'My dear Vernon,' he said, 'you have considerable humour; but, like Liston, you imagine yourself to be a serious being. Why will you persist in writing poetry?'

'I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing,'

was the other's modest reply. 'Are you ready? Is your pen full of ink? The least hitch on your part may be as fatal as the call of the tax-gatherer was to Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*.'

'Are you so very full of the god?'

'Brimming.'

'Stop a bit, man; what's the title? The "*Italian Boy*" reminds one of Burke and Hare. What do you think of the "*Grinder*"? The thing is full of fun, of course.'

'It's nothing of the kind, sir. On the contrary, it's most uncommonly pathetic. The youth is an exile——'

'Oh, yes; I remember,' said Felspar, 'and he compares British with Italian scenery.'

'Well, yes; I confess I think that view of his position a happy one.'

'It was Miss Josceline's,' observed Felspar, quietly.

'Yes; but she did not reserve the copyright, I believe; he

said this a little curtly ; then adding with mock gaiety, 'Be so good as to favour me with your attention, Mr. Amanuensis,' he began to walk rapidly up and down the room dictating as he did so:—

Your sun is bright, your skies are blue,  
The shadows on your hills are few ;  
But yet I miss the golden noon  
And yet the soft Italian hue.

For what I know, your mountain lines  
Are grand and tall as Apennines ;  
But I do long for their clear heights  
And their long rows of purple vines.

Your woods for bird may wave as free,  
Your flowers as fair may smile for bee ;  
But, ah, I pine for leaf and bloom  
That blows and beams athwart the sea.

'Is that all?' inquired Felspar.

'Well; the editor only wanted three verses and one only gets the same money for four, you see.'

'Very good, my dear Vernon ; you will succeed in literature.

'You really like the little poem, do you, then?' replied the other eagerly, with an author's blush.

'I did not say so. I only said you would succeed in your profession because you are so economical of your ideas. It is a fine thing not to spoil the market. Half a guinea for three verses is three-and-sixpence a verse, whereas half-a-guinea for four verses——'

'Is beyond your powers of calculation,' put in Vernon, laughing.

'I could do it if you gave me time,' said Felspar, confidently.

'It would be a sum in very long division, then. The idea of an artist attempting mathematics!'

'And this is because I have not praised his poem!' exclaimed Felspar, appealing through the open window to universal nature. 'Oh, *irritabile genus*! My dear Vernon, the lines are really good. There is not, however, quite enough trellis work for the greenery ; one sees the sun through it too much.'

'Ah! there I differ from you ; I should say, now, though far from obscure, if anything it was too suggestive.'

Felspar tossed his tawny hair, and laughed loud and long. 'To please a poet the praise must be "thick and slab," indeed, like witches' soup,' he said.

'You are quite right, my dear Felspar, and I am a vain fool,' answered Vernon, penitently. 'But I confess I was rather sweet upon those verses ; I thought of them as I came down from the Danecliff. They seemed to come much more naturally than verses for the *Keepsake* generally do.'



'And yet you were going to the Doctor's to be treated for snake-bite!' said Felspar, gravely.

'Yes; if the case ends fatally,' answered the other, smiling; 'the poem will have quite a tragic interest, like the wild swan's Death Hymn. You don't think the parallel very complete?'

'You are much more like a wild swan than a tame one, at all events,' admitted Felspar.

'And yet do you know, old fellow,' said Vernon, softly, 'I don't feel so wild as I did. I have a sensation—not an unpleasant one, but very sobering—of having had my wings clipped.'

'Indeed!' answered Felspar, with an affectation of indifference which the other's keen sense of observation would easily have detected had not his mind been monopolised by something else; 'and by whom?'

'By Cupid's shears. Of course it sounds ridiculous that in such a very little time and on so slight an acquaintance——'

'The operation seldom takes very long,' put in Felspar, with a quiet smile.

'That is true; I should not have spoken about it, however, at all events not yet, but for that promise we made to one another—just as two people agree that whoever should die first shall tell the other all about it, you know.'

'Which they never do,' interrupted Felspar.

'No; because they can't keep their promise; but about love you can, you see. Whichever of us was first "smitten" was to tell the other, you remember, how it felt.'

'To be sure; I recollect,' answered the other, in a low, mechanical tone; 'and how *does* it feel?'

'It feels,' said Vernon, taking his pipe from his mouth and looking out on the horizon, 'like a metamorphosis; as though, having been little better than a brute, I was changed into a man. It feels, though I know I am but dreaming, that I have something now to work for and to live for which is not myself. Number one has vanished, and number two has become the unit of existence. It feels as though a word of praise from her I love would outweigh all the "hebdomadal immortality," as you once called it, that was ever conferred by the critics of the *Parthenon*.'

And here he stopped and pulled softly at his pipe, which would otherwise have expired through his eloquence. Felspar had taken up a sketch-book and was at work with his pencil, but he kept his face to his friend. 'And why should you say, "I know I am but dreaming"?' he inquired.

'Because I know it is so. I am penniless as compared with her, and I have not the gift of accumulation, nor even of taking care of the pennies. I am not such a fool, nor yet so base, as to think seriously of asking her to share such a lot as mine'—he pointed contemptuously to the pipes and cards and dog-eared books—'I worship her from afar, and am content. "The desire of the moth for the star, of the night for the morrow," which I



used to think vague and high falutin', is really the expression that suits me; I do not flatter myself with the hope of getting nearer to her. Only it is just this, Felspar, that if I thought I was about to die of this flea-bite'—and he touched his wounded hand—'I swear to you it would give me pleasure, since it would seem to me that I had perished in preserving her.'

'And you have seen this young lady but twice, I believe, in your life, and only in the last twenty-four hours?' observed Felspar, quietly.

'Just so. I have seen the sunrise about as often, and may never see it again; but, for all that, I shall often think of it, and never forget it. I now know what the man meant who said that to have enjoyed the acquaintance of a certain lady was to have received a liberal education. You are thinking me a fool, of course; but you will observe that I am not such a fool as to suppose that this dream of mine can have any fulfilment. I am not telling it to you, as Pharaoh's butler told his to Joseph, with a view to interpretation, for it needs none. I am only keeping my word with you. And mind, old fellow, when your time comes, you keep your word with me.'

'Very good. If it ever should come, I will,' answered Felspar, slowly.

'You talk like an old bachelor, and you are but twenty-eight,' exclaimed Vernon, laughing. 'You look like one of those who preach the damnable doctrine that men are better without wives—a celibate, a misogynist. What the deuce has come to you? You could not wear a graver face if I had suggested proposing myself to the Hon. George Emilius Josceline as a son-in-law in form: "I have but a hundred a year, sir, it is true, but I have Genius with an enormous G." Come, advise me, my philosopher and friend, as to this passion of my soul; though, indeed, I can read your thought in your face. You would bid me "pluck it from my bosom though my heart be at the root," and you would be quite right.'

'I would bid you do nothing of the kind, Vernon. It is a matter, indeed, in which one man can scarcely advise another.'

'And yet you told me once that your real reason for entering into our little compact was that you might have the opportunity, when I fell in love, of pulling me out of it, and saving me from the consequences of what was sure to be a great folly.'

'Did I? That must have been in joke. I take it for granted,' added Felspar, with a certain abrupt severity, 'that you are not in joke now?'

'Certainly not, my dear fellow. One does not joke, as Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz observed, with the heart seared. Seriously, I am so far gone that when Mr. Josceline said he should come to ask after me to-morrow, accompanied by his daughter, my heart seemed to stop beating, and then, as if to make up for lost time, went on at the rate of—well, I should say, twenty miles an hour.'

‘I never heard of a heart going so far as that,’ replied Felspar, drily. ‘But that reminds me that I have not had my daily stretcher, and after a picnic one wants it more than usual. I suppose I can leave you without anxiety?’

‘As regards the snake-bite, most certainly; and as to the other wound’—and Vernon touched his heart, and laughed—‘that is past remedy.’

Felspar took his hat—a wide-awake, purchased of the Wallington general purveyor, and which needed much the title of ‘sombbrero’ which Vernon had bestowed upon it to invest it with picturesqueness—and left the cottage. He took the path to the coastguard station, which led over the cliffs for miles. The afternoon was hot, but he did not feel the heat; the views of sea and land were more glorious even than usual, but for once they had no attraction for him. He was thinking of his friend and of the strange confession he had just made to him. That it had been made in a half-jocular form did not make it less serious; that was Vernon’s way of alluding to any matter, however deeply he might feel it. Nor did Vernon’s assertion that his sudden passion for Miss Josceline was, he was well aware, an impracticable dream afford Felspar much consolation on his friend’s account. If Vernon had really felt it to be so, there would have been no need to mention it, for one doesn’t tell one’s dreams. Moreover, it had so happened that Felspar had given very particular attention, not only to Vernon’s behaviour towards the young lady in question, but also to the manner in which his attentions had been received; and that they had been welcome to her he felt certain. Again, as to the little incident of the snake-bite, it was natural that Miss Josceline should have expressed concern about Vernon, who had been injured in preserving her from injury; but there are many ways of expressing concern, and it struck Felspar that in Miss Josceline’s way there had been tenderness as well as gratitude. And as he said to himself, not once nor twice, but often during that solitary walk, ‘And wherefore not?’ Vernon was handsome, with manners exceedingly prepossessing, witty, or with the high spirits that easily pass for wit, and, indeed, are more attractive. This could not be gainsaid, and by Felspar least of all men; for the young fellow had won his way into the painter’s own heart through his possession of those very gifts, and of much better ones, which it only needed knowledge of the man to discover. A franker or a more generous spirit did not exist; nor, notwithstanding that little touchiness about his poem, a more modest one withal. ‘I shall never do much for myself, and far less for the world, in my own calling,’ he had once said to Felspar. ‘I pursue it because I love it; because it is the pleasantest method that suggests itself for making my bread; and that my devotion is not reciprocated is not my fault. I have often read that a man should not take to letters as a calling unless he experiences a certain divine inspiration, or at least a confidence that he will

reach the top of the tree; but why should it be so? A man is not dissuaded from the law because he has doubts of becoming Lord Chancellor; or from the Church because he feels it improbable he shall one day lodge in Lambeth Palace. Perhaps I might make more money—though I doubt it—in one of the more recognised professions; but I am deficient in the *auri sacra fames*—the passion for dying a millionaire that possesses so many excellent people. I had rather have a little and do what I like, than acquire a great deal by working against the grain.'

This might not be very sensible, looked at from the man-of-the-world standpoint; but Felspar was not a man of the world, and this candid statement of his young friend's opinion had recommended itself to him. It would not do so, of course, to most people; to some indeed, such as Mr. Josceline, for example, as he imagined, the very adoption of such a pursuit as literature would count against his young friend; its frequent failures, its small successes, and the very moderate social position it confers upon its disciples, would make it contemptible; but in the eyes of a few, themselves given to intellectual pursuits—young, too, and hopeful, and setting small store on material things—Vernon's calling would be an interesting one, and none the less so because it was precarious. In Miss Josceline's eyes, for example, unless he was much mistaken, it would be interesting.

One would have thought that to Mr. Felspar, while these reflections ran through his mind, it might have occurred that his own position in life was something akin to that of his young friend, while it had the undoubted advantage of being much more assured. He was an older man than Vernon, it is true; but he was still young, and could boast both of promise and performance. He was already making a small but sufficient income of his own, and, should he choose to restrict his attention to the portrait-taking branch of his profession (for which he had a considerable reputation), might do very well for himself. But if any comparison between himself and his friend did enter his mind, it came and went as swiftly as the sea-gull that occasionally crossed the patch of blue sky above him 'with one waft of her wing.'

It had happened to Felspar once in a far distant land to walk with a friend for miles in a lonely, sterile track. In a certain gully where there was water and they had stopped to bathe, he had picked up a small rough lump of something which looked to him to be gold, of which there had of late been great discoveries in that neighbourhood; but being reticent by nature, doubting his own scanty stock of science, and also, perhaps (for he was younger then), sensitive to ridicule, he said nothing of it at the time, intending to confide in his friend later if he found his hopes confirmed. But that very evening, as they sat in their log hut together—for they were dwelling in the wilds—his friend had laid his hand upon his knee and earnestly exclaimed, 'I have a secret to confide to you, old fellow, which will make both our

fortunes. In Danton Creek to-day (the name of the gully) I found gold. The place is mine to work in by miners' law, and as soon as I can get my claim you shall halve it.' Felspar had his own nugget in his pocket while the other spoke, but forbore to produce it. He would not rob his friend of the pleasure of an act of generosity, nor would he accept the half share of the claim, though he took some of it. His companion, who had recognised the gold at a glance, and had been the first to speak of it, had to Felspar's mind the prior right to the discovery. And something of the same kind had happened that day to Vernon and himself; but, alas! the claim could not be shared.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE CALL.

ON the morrow, Vernon's hand was pronounced by the Doctor, who called upon him professionally, to be doing fairly well; and after a late breakfast he pulled his arm-chair to the window with the intention, as usual, of smoking his pipe.

'I think you had better not do that,' observed Felspar, who had been more silent that morning even than usual, and apparently much engaged with his pencil.

'Better not do what?' inquired the other in amazement 'not smoke?'

'Considering that a lady is coming to pay you a visit,' continued Felspar, grimly. 'I certainly think you had better not. Clover Cottage is not a very aristocratic abode, but why make it like a public-house?'

'Miss Josceline told me she did not object to smoke,' replied Vernon.

'Still, her father probably does—at least, to pipe-smoking; he is the sort of man, I fancy, who thinks it vulgar to have anything in one's mouth but a cigarette.'

'Very likely,' said Vernon, proceeding deliberately to light his pipe; 'I should think he was a man less charitable to vulgarity, or what he conceives to be such, than to worse things.'

Felspar put down his pencil, and stared earnestly at his companion, who, unconscious of his gaze, continued to admire the landscape from the window seat, or to seem to do so.

'Pray, remember, my dear Felspar, that I do not deceive myself in this matter in any respect. If there were not half a dozen other obstacles to the realisation of this dream of mine, I believe the character of my proposed papa-in-law would be an insuperable one; we have nothing in common, he and I.'

'You seem to have observed him very closely, considering your opportunities.'



‘I have. It is my trade to take stock of my fellow-creatures. We speak of some people as having all their faults upon the surface ; with Mr. Josceline it is quite the reverse ; all his virtues—such as they are—are made the most of ; and they are only imitations of virtues. Instead of having true delicacy of feeling, he is merely fastidious ; in place of independence of character, he shows a careless indifference which, however, changes to an affectation of polite interest when it is worth his while. Do you not notice what court he pays to your friend, Mrs. Jennynge, and how civil he is to Mr. Aird ? It is because he believes them to be wealthy.’

‘I wonder,’ said Felspar, gently, and as if to himself, ‘whether this individual, thus graphically described, has ever adopted a contrary course towards any young gentleman he supposed to be poor. Instead of affecting a polite interest, I mean, is it possible that he has ever snubbed him ?’

‘No ; to do him justice, I can’t say that he has,’ replied Vernon, frankly ; ‘he is so good as to endure me—at a distance.’

‘His tolerance does not appear to be reciprocated,’ observed Felspar, drily. ‘I do not deny your powers of intuition, my dear fellow ; but although the study of character may be a man’s calling, it does not follow that his judgments are always right. Your experience of life is as yet necessarily limited, which renders you liable to mistakes, and, in this case, are you sure you are not swayed by personal prejudice ? You talk about the difference of views entertained by yourself and Mr. Josceline as being an obstacle in relation to a certain matter, but is not that gentleman himself an obstacle ? I am not a student of human nature by profession ; I am only a painter. But I have lived in the world longer than you have.’

‘You are a better judge of men than I am,’ broke in the other ; ‘I grant that ; and I dare say of women, too. To you my passion for this Dulcinea may seem utterly incomprehensible : but it has caused me to observe her closely, to remember every word she has uttered, to treasure it up——’

‘We need not discuss the young lady,’ interrupted Felspar, coldly ; ‘we were talking of her father.’

‘Very good ; let us finish with him first. Now, upon your honour, Felspar’—and the young man turned his chair round and confronted his friend—‘do you really like Mr. Josceline ?’

‘I think he is the most agreeable man I ever met.’

‘That’s no answer to my question. I allow that his powers of pleasing—or rather of making himself pleasant—are extraordinary. In the billiard-room the other night, under great disadvantages, he acquitted himself in that way to admiration ; but there is no naturalness about him : he gives one the idea of an actor ; whereas his daughter——’

‘Let me again remind you, we are talking of the father, my dear fellow.’



'True; well, he strikes me as the most polished of actors.'

'Which is surely high praise,' returned Felspar. 'He exerted himself, too, for our sakes; there was nothing charged for admission. You are like the people who go to the play with orders; they are always the most critical. Why should this gentleman have troubled himself, unless from good nature, to make himself agreeable at all? It is not the way with those who find everybody (as he has done) at the *Ultramarine* ready to worship him. And as to his acting, his rôle of father at least strikes me as nature itself.'

'Yes; I admit it, he is fond of his daughter,' observed Vernon, slowly.

'Are you sure, then, that you are not prejudiced against him on that account? That is to say, would you not like him better if he struck you as less resolute to assert (which he does, somehow, without assertion) her position and his own?'

'I think not; I hope not,' said Vernon, doubtfully: 'if I were so influenced, it would prove me to be a fool—a madman.'

'At all events, I think it would be very bad manners to show any dislike to him. And if—if you have the regard for Miss Josceline of which you speak, it strikes me that for her sake you should pay her father due deference and respect.'

'Would you have me truckle to him for his daughter's sake?' exclaimed Vernon, pacing the room excitedly. 'Would you have me put it in his power to tell me some day, in his smooth, gracious way, that I was giving myself very unnecessary trouble in making myself agreeable to him?'

'Good heavens! Do you suppose, then, that he entertains any suspicion of your passion?'

'Of course not; and he never shall. No one but yourself shall ever do that. I am sorry that I told even you.'

'So am I,' returned Felspar, gravely; 'that is,' he added, quickly, 'if it distresses you to have done so. But, having confided in me, it is surely allowable to offer you a friend's advice.'

'Of course it is, my dear Felspar. And, as it happens, I am wise enough to take it. You will have no cause to complain of my behaviour to Mr. Josceline. Only I will not go one hair's breadth out of my way to make what is called a good impression on him.'

'Very good; there is, however, no occasion to make a bad impression. I am sorry you insist on smoking; but, at all events, let me entreat you to put somewhere out of sight of your expected visitors that choice but not very attractive collection of pipes; those dog-eared railway volumes, and especially that yellow French novel; and those packs of playing cards, which suggest the idea of our being a couple of gamblers who practise our art assiduously at home before sallying out to cheat the public.'

'I will put away the French novel, Felspar, but not the rest,' said Vernon, decisively. 'I am not going to sail under false

colours. There is my table, the table of Thomas Idle; and there is yours, by comparison a very neat and tidy one, and obviously the table of Francis Goodchild—By Jove! here they are at the door.'

And, in spite of his resolve to appear at his worst, Mr. Vernon hurriedly knocked the ashes from his pipe, and if his arm had not been in a sling would have run his fingers through his hair.

The next moment Mr. Josceline and his daughter were announced.

'We are come to inquire after the invalid,' said that gentleman, gaily. 'I need hardly ask, however, having seen him, "Is he better?"'

Indeed, Vernon's face was of a colour which, if it was not an evidence of high fever, was calculated to set the anxieties of his friends at rest on the score of health.

'I am quite ashamed to have brought you here, and especially Miss Josceline,' replied the sick man, 'upon what must seem to be such false pretences. I feel like a rank impostor. Except that my right hand is a little swollen, there is nothing whatever the matter with me.'

'But there might have been, Mr. Vernon,' said Ella, gravely. 'I have come to thank you—'

'Oh, please don't!' interrupted Vernon. 'I have done nothing to earn thanks, and if you only knew the pleasure——' He hesitated, and then stopped short, covered with confusion and humiliation. The earnest, eager words had escaped him unconsciously; but directly they had passed his lips he recognised what he had said, and the tone of it; and bitterly regretted both.

'Now, that's very prettily said,' remarked Mr. Josceline, with an air of extreme good nature. 'Mr. Vernon would have you believe, Ella, that the aspic's bite is quite a luxury—like aspic jelly.'

'At all events, I beg to state that *I* have suffered,' observed Felspar. 'For, as Vernon's hand was lamed, I have had to act as his amanuensis, and in that capacity have had not only to listen to one of his own poems, but to write it down.'

'You ought to have considered it a great privilege,' said Mr. Josceline, with pretended indignation. 'What a snug bachelor's room you two gentlemen have got here!' And he glanced admiringly at the cheap railway volumes as though he were in the Bodleian—and in the presence of the librarian.'

'We play a little piquet together occasionally in the evenings,' explained Mr. Felspar, putting in a word of apology for the cards.

'But generally cribbage,' put in Vernon; 'and not only in the evenings, but also on wet days.'

'And quite right too,' remarked Mr. Josceline, approvingly. 'I have always thought that cribbage is not sufficiently appreciated. It teaches one arithmetic, for one thing.'

'I wish it would teach *me*,' said Vernon. 'Arithmetic is one of the things (like Lord Dundreary) I never *can* understand.'

'Ah, that is because you have so much imagination!' returned Mr. Josceline. 'The wretched details of pounds, shillings, and pence are always offensive to a man of letters.'

'Fortunately, however, his calling does not demand much acquaintance with pounds,' observed Vernon.

'Then, in that case,' remarked Felspar, drily, 'the general opinion as to the sums made by literary men in these days must be very erroneous. I know many living writers—by name at least—who have the reputation of making large incomes by their pens.'

'Oh, the reputation!' replied Vernon, scornfully. 'I could have had the reputation of making 50*l.* by a poem of five hundred lines, if I had chosen to have it.'

'Dear me! Now that's very interesting,' said Mr. Josceline; 'you could have got two shillings a line, if you pleased, for writing a poem that took you how long?'

'Well, perhaps two months, off and on.'

'Now, that's marvellous! No less than three hundred a year, if you could always have gone on writing!'

'Yes; but I did not say I could have got the 50*l.*, but only the reputation of having got it,' said Vernon, coldly. 'As a matter of fact, I should only have netted 5*l.*'

'I don't understand,' said Mr. Josceline.

'Well, few people would,' continued Vernon, smiling. 'The circumstances were these. A certain weekly newspaper—price twopence——'

'That presupposes nothing,' observed Felspar, in allusion to the other's contemptuous air. 'It may have been twopence to buy, but ten thousand a year in the pockets of the proprietors.'

'It may have been; but it wasn't,' continued Vernon, coolly. 'The "Bloodred Banner," as it was called, was, I have reason to suspect, in no very prosperous circumstances when it offered a prize of 50*l.* for the best poem of five hundred lines upon the subject of "Liberty." I was a candidate for it, and, I may say, the successful one, since I received a private communication from the editor to say if I would accept 5*l.* instead of the 50*l.* I should have all the honours of victory, and have my name and address printed as the winner. I did not accept the generous proposal; but, as I have said, I might have done it, and so far secured a reputation.'

'But what a dreadful man the editor must have been!' exclaimed Ella.

'Well; he was not a very nice man,' answered Vernon, laughing; 'but I conclude his proprietors were the people to blame in that matter.'

'A most interesting revelation, I am sure,' observed Mr. Josceline. 'It is quite delightful to get, as it were, behind the scenes of literature in this way.'

'The "Bloodred Banner" could scarcely be called literature,'

remarked Felspar; 'and no one is more aware of the fact than Vernon.'

'Well; I think that's very hard,' said Mr. Josceline, laughing, 'considering that our young friend here wrote for it.'

'But then, papa, he did not know at that time what sort of people they were,' remarked Ella; 'and I am sure he had nothing more to do with them when he found it out.'

'Well; I confess I did not enter into any more competitions for their prize poems,' admitted Vernon, smiling.

'He might also confess, Miss Josceline, if he chose,' said Felspar, 'that he never again wrote for the "Banner." To do him justice, he is not a person to sail under false pretences, or to associate with those who do.'

'Nay; you must really not say that, Felspar,' said Vernon, with a laugh that had a curious sort of bitterness in it, 'since you know all about the "Village Lytch-Gate."'

'Now what was that?' inquired Mr. Josceline. 'I dare say it is very entertaining, though the name sounds a little melancholy.'

'It sounds very melancholy,' assented Vernon, 'and was intended to be so. The "Village Lytch-Gate" was a magazine started to attract the melancholy public, which is a very large one. I was one of its staff. I wrote an article monthly called "The Vicar's Musings;" they were signed "The Old Vicar." I was then about eighteen. They used to begin in this way: "From the window where I now sit my eye rests upon my wife's grave; fresh flowers are strewn upon it. She is not lost, but gone before," and so on. They were thought a good deal of by the melancholy newspapers, the favourable notices of which I used to read with avidity: "*The Old Vicar is as thoughtful and serene as ever this week;*" "*The Old Vicar will be widely read, and do good,*" &c. He could not, however, have been very widely read,' added Vernon, 'because the magazine expired in its fourth month.'

It was curious to watch the different effect of the recital of this literary experience, which was given in the most humorous manner, in the faces of those who listened to it. That of Mr. Felspar was very grave; he felt that Vernon was sinking lower and lower in the opinion of their visitors with every word he spoke, and, though he knew that the young fellow was designedly making the worst of himself, he was powerless to remove the bad impression thus created. What he told was true in the main, and could not be contradicted. He was telling it, as Felspar well understood, in a sort of desperation; he wished his two visitors to understand that he was but a free-lance of literature, with as little principle as prosperity—a 'detrimental' of the very saddest class. That he had quite succeeded in attaining this object as far as Mr. Josceline was concerned, was evident, and also that it was the very impression which that gentleman would have had



him convey. His face expressed an amused contempt, which annoyed Felspar exceedingly. Ella's countenance, on the other hand, though it had a tinge of sadness in it, as though she regretted that Vernon had assumed, even in the pages of a magazine, a fictitious character, and especially such a one as he had impersonated, was full of the liveliest interest; and this, perhaps, pained Felspar—though he would not have owned it even to himself—more than her father's scorn. She had not been able to avoid laughing, even at the most serious parts of the young man's recital, and when he finished she certainly looked much more amused than shocked.

'A most entertaining experience,' observed Mr. Josceline, 'and, what is more, so thoroughly characteristic. This Bohemian sort of existence of yours, my dear Mr. Vernon, must surely have great charms.'

'Yes,' returned the young man gravely; 'in some respects it has an advantage over even the possession of large estates; for property, one always hears it said, has its duties as well as its privileges: whereas those who pursue the calling of literature are looked upon by the world at large as irresponsible for their actions, and nothing in the way of respectability is expected of them.'

'And a very agreeable position, too, I should imagine,' remarked Mr. Josceline, with the air of a man who, for his own part, was the pink of propriety, and had served the office of churchwarden in his parish for many years. 'By-the-bye, Mr. Felspar,' he added, 'before we bring our most interesting visit to Clover Cottage to a close, my daughter has something to say to you, I believe, respecting her progress in Art.'

'Oh, papa! how can you?' remonstrated Ella. 'I merely told my father, Mr. Felspar, that I should trouble you for your opinion, and perhaps for a hint or two, since you were so good as to offer them, respecting a little drawing I did last night. When you happen to be at the hotel I shall get you to look at it.'

'Oh, but I've brought it with me!' said Mr. Josceline, quietly. 'I thought that is what you wanted, my dear; at all events, it will give Mr. Felspar less trouble to ask him about it here. One may accept advice from a physician as a friend, if one meets him in the street; but if you summon him for a consultation, that is a professional matter, and should be recompensed accordingly. At this juncture the post arrived with a letter for Vernon. 'There, my dear Ella, while Mr. Vernon is reading his correspondence—which I hope he will do, or he will make us quite uncomfortable—you can lay your little difficulties before Mr. Felspar. That is my daughter's drawing; it seems to represent an Italian organ-grinder.'

Vernon had broken the envelope of his letter; but at these words he desisted from further attempts in that direction, and listened with all his ears. His heart beat so fast and loud that he thought the others must hear it.



‘The young foreigner,’ continued Mr. Josceline, with the drawing held critically before him, ‘has placed his objectionable instrument upon the ground, and, though evidently in a picturesque part of the country, is regarding the works of nature with anything but an appreciative eye. He is apparently saying to himself, “This locality is very inferior to what I am accustomed to at home.”’

‘If I am not mistaken,’ said Mr. Felspar, quietly, ‘that is the very impression Miss Josceline wished to convey. We were talking on the subject on our way to the picnic yesterday; for my friend Vernon——’

‘Indeed, Mr. Felspar,’ interrupted Ella, appealingly, though in a tone she did her best to render indifferent, ‘I would much rather that the consideration of my poor drawing was left to some other time. It is a positive waste of opportunities, since you have your own portfolio here; and both papa and I are so desirous to see those sketches of Wallington Bay and its neighbourhood, which we have heard are so beautiful.’

‘Yes, indeed,’ said Mr. Josceline; ‘next to making due inquiry after our young friend, our object in coming here was the hope of our being so favoured, I do assure you.’

With a bow and a quiet smile Mr. Felspar undid the strings of the portfolio, when the very first drawing that presented itself, to his own horror and to the astonishment of his visitors, was a portrait of Miss Ella Josceline. It was but an outline, rapidly sketched in while his friend had been talking to him on the subject of the original on the previous evening; but for whom it was intended there could be no doubt.

‘Why, dear me, that’s you, Ella,’ observed Mr. Josceline, drily.

Mr. Felspar was almost at his wits’ end with confusion. He had quite forgotten that he had himself placed the sketch among his landscapes in order to conceal it from Vernon’s eyes, and his own amazement at beholding it there was hardly less than that of the other two. ‘I am afraid I must plead guilty,’ he said, ‘to having portrayed Miss Josceline from memory. It is a habit I have when any face strikes me—when, in fact, I see any new face. I have got Miss Jennynge somewhere, and Davey Aird. They are little better than caricatures.’

‘Nay; this is very good,’ said Mr. Josceline, frankly, ‘and very like.’

‘The association may give it a fictitious value in your eyes, Mr. Josceline,’ said Felspar, modestly; ‘in which case I hope you will do me the favour to accept it.’

Mr. Josceline expressed himself in proper terms of gratitude and appreciation. They were in some degree genuine, for the sketch of his daughter pleased him much; but, as his habit was, he greatly exaggerated his sense of the value of the gift—and yet, if he had used much stronger and more fervent expressions, they would have been inadequate to suggest what it cost the giver.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ELLA IS GIVEN HER 'CHANCE.'

It was most creditable to Felspar's powers of self-control that, after the first moment of astonishment at the sight of Ella's portrait in his portfolio, he had contrived to put on the whole affair the most matter-of-fact and commonplace construction. It is probable that the keen intelligence of Mr. Josceline would have had its suspicions had they not already been excited in another quarter; but, as matters were, the painter's explanation of the matter seemed quite sufficient to him. He understood, indeed, that Felspar admired his daughter; that he had been so struck with her appearance, in fact, that he had made for himself a lasting record of it; but this was only, as he imagined, in a professional way. Upon the whole he was rather flattered and pleased by the circumstance than otherwise.

Ella understood, of course—what woman would not?—that a very pretty compliment had been paid to her, and that was all. It was not the same sort of compliment which she had paid to Vernon in portraying the 'Organ Boy,' though thereby she had only intended to express an interest in the subject which might be supposed to be occupying his attention, and which had by chance attracted her own. She felt grateful to Mr. Felspar for having taken so much trouble about her, though, as he protested, it had been but a few minutes' work, and especially for having pleased her father by making him a present of the sketch; but, as her feelings went no further, she in no way shared his embarrassment.

As for Vernon, he was not even aware of what was taking place; and even if he had been, it is probable that the discovery of Ella's portrait in his friend's portfolio would not just then have had any especial significance for him. The fact was he was thinking of her solely in reference to himself. To him it seemed that her selection of his 'Organ Boy' as a subject for her pencil was not only the most gracious compliment that had ever been conferred upon him, but—for one treacherous moment—something more. Was it not possible that the interest excited by the subject of his poem might have extended to the author himself? If so—well, if so, it would be a great misfortune for herself, and he had involuntarily become the cause of her unhappiness. For although it might have struck anyone who had heard him speak, as he had spoken to Felspar, of his conviction of the hopelessness of his passion for Miss Josceline, that he did 'protest too much,' his protestations had been perfectly genuine. For a young man, Vernon was exceptionally gifted with common sense; he did not

agree with the general opinions of mankind, but he understood them, and appreciated their force. He kept his imagination for his stories and his poems, and to matters of real life applied a very practical judgment. His sense of humour—a very great safety valve for our enthusiasms—enabled him to see what was ridiculous, even in his own aspirations. But for one moment, as I have said, when Mr. Josceline had mentioned what Ella's pencil had been engaged upon, Vernon had allowed himself to be carried away by a feeling of rapturous exaltation.

He recovered himself almost immediately; and, even while Felspar was untying his portfolio, had begun to open the letter which had arrived for him, though with his mind scarcely fitted for business affairs. The note was from the editor of the 'Keepsake,' and ran as follows:—

'Dear V.,—I hope you have not drawn largely upon the founts of inspiration as regards the "Organ Grinder." The wife of the artist who had the picture in hand writes to say that "the pressure of mental work" has been for the present too much for her husband—a euphemism, very likely, for the premonitory symptoms of *delirium tremens*, for I know he is fond of the sparkling bowl; but at all events there is no chance of the drawing being ready for our next number unless your friend Felspar could be induced to help us.'

Now Felspar, for certain technical reasons which are neither here nor there—or at all events have no business here—had set his face, as Vernon was well aware, against illustrating for the magazines; but since Miss Josceline, it seemed, had drawn the required illustration, why should not *that* fill up the vacancy on the poetic page of the 'Keepsake'? I am sorry to say that for once, though Vernon was always loyal to his employers, the reflection that the picture might not be good enough for the place did not enter into his mind. There was only room there for the ecstatic idea of his own lines to the young Italian exile being illustrated by his divinity. There seemed an appropriateness in this connection such as not the most enthusiastic eulogiser of the fitness of things had ever conceived. If he had a doubt about the merits of the two productions, it was of the poem; not indeed, as to whether it was up to the standard of the 'Keepsake' (which, to say the truth, was not greatly above the average of human genius), but whether it was worthy of association with Ella's handiwork. Every poet thinks that his last lines are the best he has written; but Vernon would, if he could, have had all the genius that belonged to him, or which ever should belong to him, compressed into those three verses, for Ella's sake.

He did not indulge in the frantic despair expressed by the lover in 'Locksley Hall' that they should perish 'rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace;' he only wished to be bound in the same volume with her—her picture face to face with his

poem—and then if the magazine were to stop and never to come out again, he felt as if he could have borne it.

He heard Felspar explaining where this and that sketch in his portfolio had been taken from, how far the place might be from Wallington by land or sea, and the beauties of it when you got there. He heard the visitors praise the pictures, Mr. Josceline lamenting in his most dulcet tones that such treasures of art should be buried in a portfolio and not exhibited in public for the delectation of the human race; and Ella expressing her despair of ever doing anything to equal them if she should live to be a hundred; but not a word was spoken about Ella's own little drawing, which for him had a greater interest than all the landscapes in the world, whether in nature, oils, or water-colours.

'I see all these are landscapes,' observed Mr. Josceline, who had that modified form of appreciation of art called taste, and had taken a genuine interest in the sketches (which were in fact water-colour drawings). 'Do you do nothing in the way of figures?'

'A little,' said Felspar, smiling.

'Oh, papa, you have surely heard of Mr. Felspar's portraits!' murmured Ella.

'I have lived abroad for many years,' explained Mr. Josceline, without turning a hair in the way of embarrassment. 'One of the misfortunes of that mode of life is that it leaves one in ignorance of all that goes on in the world of literature and art. That Mr. Felspar can take a likeness when he pleases we have had a most gratifying proof, and if he portrays persons generally as well as he does places (as I do not doubt), there must be another treat in store for us.'

'Oh, pray do not let us see any of your figure-drawings to-day, Mr. Felspar!' pleaded Ella. 'As papa has brought my own poor little sketch here, I cannot risk any comparisons; and I know you will tell me what is wrong with it—or rather, whether it is all wrong.'

'Your sketch has been infamously neglected, Miss Josceline,' said Felspar, smiling, 'but it was really not my fault; you will bear me witness, Vernon, that commands were laid upon me which compelled this egotistic exhibition.'

'I did not hear them,' said Vernon, drily, 'and can therefore give no evidence except to character. I can only say that I have always noticed in professionals a very marked jealousy of amateurs.'

'And in cases where work is so good as this it is not only natural but excusable,' said Felspar, gallantly.

He had taken the drawing in his hand, and was holding it out at arm's length, so that all the others could see it.

'There is a great deal of expression in this, Miss Josceline, and still more of suggestion. The figure, however, is here a little out of drawing.'

'Well, upon my word!' exclaimed Vernon, indignantly.

'Mr. Felspar is quite right,' said Ella; 'I can see it myself. The poor boy's arm is broken.'

'Do not let us say broken,' said Felspar, soothingly. 'It is not what Dr. Cooper calls a "compound comminuted fracture," at all events; there, you see, a stroke of the pencil has cured him. One of his legs, too, is a little queer.'

'I should say both his legs,' said Mr. Josceline, uncompromisingly; 'one is certainly shorter than the other.'

'Nay, it looks to me only foreshortened,' said Vernon; 'just, in fact, as it ought to be.'

'Then the hills,' continued Felspar, critically, 'are lumpy.'

'You wouldn't have them flat, would you?' inquired Vernon.

'I quite see what Mr. Felspar means,' said Ella, humbly. 'If it was not for his good-nature, he would tell me the whole truth.'

'I will, if you really wish it,' said Felspar, gravely.

'Quite right,' assented Mr. Josceline; 'it is much better, my dear Ella, that you should not flatter yourself with illusions about your own proficiency. It is a sort of thing in which it takes a lifetime to attain any sort of excellence. *Ars longa, vita brevis.*'

'Which, being translated,' muttered Vernon, 'means that, so far as Art is concerned, Life is too short for the rubbish that is talked about it.'

'Well, the fact is, so far as my judgment is worth anything,' pronounced Felspar, seriously, 'this little drawing of yours, Miss Josceline, is full of merit; nay, if you have really never had a master, I will add of genius.'

'And Felspar is a man who knows,' put in Vernon, quickly.

'Yes, yes; but we must not misunderstand him,' observed Mr. Josceline, who, though secretly pleased with this praise of his daughter's talents, was nervously apprehensive that it might strengthen her in those ideas of supporting herself by her own exertions which he had his own reasons for discouraging. 'We must remember that Mr. Felspar is giving judgment—and a very good-natured one—upon the picture as an amateur production, and that he does not for a moment bring it into comparison (indeed, as you have heard, my daughter has the sense to perceive that for herself) with the work of a professional.'

'It is quite true I made no comparison of that sort, Mr. Josceline,' said Felspar, gravely; 'but, carefully guarding myself from the language of exaggeration, I have seen many worse drawings than your daughter's in public exhibitions; nor do I doubt for an instant that this would find its place and fetch its price with those, for example, of our magazines which publish woodcuts.'

'With all deference, I should very much doubt that,' observed Mr. Josceline, hurriedly; 'though, as there is no chance of the matter in question being brought to proof, we may each retain our respective opinions.'



‘As it happens,’ observed Vernon, with quiet distinctness, ‘there is a chance, and indeed a most excellent opportunity, of bringing the thing to a test at once;’ and he placed his letter from the editor of the ‘Mayfair Keepsake’ into Mr. Josceline’s hand.

‘Dear me!’ said that gentleman, perusing it aloud, and frowning a good deal more than was necessary to maintain the equilibrium of his double glasses upon his nose, ‘the coincidence is certainly remarkable—very remarkable;’ indeed, for one instant it was plain that a suspicion of the whole affair being what the police call a ‘plant’ was passing through his mind. ‘Still, although I perceive the chance it offers of my daughter’s drawing taking the place of that of the gentleman who has succumbed to *delirium tremens*—which would, of course, be a great compliment to her—it does not appear a certainty; and, granting that she would fully appreciate the honour of contributing to the columns of the “Keepsake,” I think it would distress her in a proportionate degree to be rejected. I should be very unwilling, very, to expose her to the risk of such a humiliation.’

‘Oh, papa, do let me try, just once!’ exclaimed Ella, appealingly. ‘It will be no humiliation to me to fail, but only a very proper reproof to my presumption. And if I were to succeed, oh, dear papa, you don’t know what an extreme pleasure it would be to me!’

‘What an extraordinary thing!’ remonstrated Mr. Josceline. ‘An extreme pleasure to see your drawing in the columns of this two-penny-halfpenny magazine!’

‘It’s a sixpenny one,’ observed Vernon, with some dignity; for he did not like to hear one of the few periodicals in which he found acceptance so materially depreciated.

‘What *does* it signify,’ exclaimed Mr. Josceline, allowing himself for an instant to show his irritation, ‘if it were half-a-crown? I say, what pleasure, my dear Ella, can you possibly find in seeing your pretty little drawing spoilt by a clumsy woodcutter’—in his hurry he said woodpecker, which made him still more angry—‘for that, I believe, is what usually happens.’

Ella said nothing; the transparent pretence of his being interested in the well-being of her drawing did not impose upon her for an instant, but she felt it was her duty to submit.

Vernon was too indignant to trust himself to speak: he felt as much disgusted with Mr. Josceline as though he had been one of those selfish possessors of gems of art who will not allow them to be engraved for the benefit of mankind; but it was not on public grounds that he was so; it seemed to him a most infamous cruelty that any one should oppose Ella’s wishes.

‘I don’t think, Mr. Josceline,’ said Felspar, smiling, ‘if you will pardon me for saying it, that you quite understand your daughter’s feelings in this little matter; the getting one’s drawing published is to the young artist what getting into print is to the author. Have *you* never longed, as a young man, to get into print?’

'No, sir; I never was'—he was about to say—'such a fool;' but he stopped himself adroitly, as a skater on the brink of an icehole, who, instead of progressing into the abyss, indulges in a flourish; 'that is, I mean, the enthusiasm of youth in my case never took that particular direction.'

'Then you must permit me to say,' said Felspar, earnestly, 'that in this particular case you can be no judge. Miss Josceline will of course bow to her father's decision; but, if I know human nature, she will be unable to divest herself of the sense of a lost opportunity. She will probably exaggerate to herself the importance of it, and the very disappointment may even beget a false confidence in her own talents: "But for papa," she will say, "I might have done wonders." Whereas, if you allowed her—"just once," as she puts it—to try her wings, she would take a more moderate view of her merits. If the drawing was rejected, for example, as you fear will be the case, it would be a severe, but on the whole, perhaps, not an unwholesome lesson.'

Ella little thought what a sharp sweet sense of pain was inflicted by the look of gratitude she here cast upon Michael Felspar. If he had earned it for himself it would have been an unalloyed delight; but his contention—though it seemed to be for her sake alone—was for another.

'Of course you ought to know best, Mr. Felspar,' said Mr. Josceline, with gentle gravity. There was no longer opposition in his tone; an idea had occurred to him which had put an entirely different aspect on the case. 'I will not pit my prejudices against your experience. Let my daughter's drawing take its chance with the Jupiter of the "Mayfair Keepsake."'

'Oh, that *is* kind of you, dear papa,' cried Ella, rapturously; and, indeed, perhaps in all her life she had never been so grateful to the author of her being. If it had not been for the presence of the two young men, she would have embraced him; but, most fortunately for both of them, she abstained from that tantalising performance.

'Only if the venture does not succeed, Ella,' continued Mr. Josceline, gravely, 'I do hope there will be no more attempts at rivalry with the gentleman whom his wife describes as having overworked his brain. You have promised that it shall be only "just this once," remember.'

Ella's countenance fell, or rather the bright light died out of it for an instant, and then rayed forth again.

'Indeed, papa, I shall be quite satisfied with the editor's verdict,' she answered, earnestly; 'and, if you wish it, will consider it as final.'

'Why, bless my soul!' exclaimed Vernon, involuntarily, 'I had six-and-twenty contributions rejected in my first year.'

'My friend is very frank,' observed Felspar, smiling. 'It is not the way of young gentlemen of letters to speak of their little disappointments so naïvely.'

‘It does him great credit, I’m sure,’ remarked Mr. Josceline, in a tone, however, in which approbation was much tempered by sarcasm. ‘The interesting fact he has communicated, however it may detract from his literary merits, speaks volumes for his perseverance.’

‘Vernon has forgotten to add,’ rejoined Felspar, ‘that many of those articles have since been accepted.’

‘Not one half of them,’ observed Vernon, grimly ; ‘you see before you a literary genius who has been even less appreciated than—in the dramatic line—was Miss Snevellicci’s papa.’

‘It does not seem to have affected your spirits, Mr. Vernon,’ said Mr. Josceline, good-naturedly. ‘And now that we have also satisfied ourselves as to the state of your health, it is time we took our leave. My daughter was saying, Mr. Felspar, that you had been kind enough to promise to lend her some figure-drawings for her instruction. If you are dining at the hotel this afternoon, and would bring them up yourself and take a cup of coffee with us after dinner, it would give us great pleasure. I should have included Mr. Vernon in the invitation, but that I am sure he ought to stay at home and nurse.’

It was with difficulty that Vernon restrained himself from asserting that nothing was wanted to complete his convalescence except a cup of coffee ; but his determination not to make a fool of himself came opportunely to his aid. Felspar, on the other hand, felt the danger that would accrue to his self-sacrificing resolutions from the acceptance of such a proposal.

‘I must, I fear, decline your kind invitation,’ he said ; ‘for the fact is that we have promised Mrs. Gammer to dine at home, and to change her arrangements after they have once been made is more than her lodgers dare to venture upon ; besides,’ he added, dropping his voice, and with a smile that was full of kindness for his friend and something more—a sort of tacit assertion of the other’s worthiness—‘I should hardly like to leave our invalid here all alone. On the other hand, if you are returning to the hotel, as I conclude, to luncheon, I will accompany you with great pleasure, and take the drawings with me.’

‘I hardly like to trouble you so far,’ said Mr. Josceline, in the most apologetic of tones ; but in his secret heart he had a reason for liking it very much, and indeed for greatly preferring that arrangement to his original proposal.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MR. JOSCELINE BECOMES CONFIDENTIAL.

It was curious, considering that the visit to Clover Cottage had been paid ostensibly to Vernon, how little had been said to him,

and how small a part he had himself played during the interview; but, nevertheless, he had been the chief object of interest to all concerned, though to each in a different way. It was not his presence, however, which had forbidden them to manifest this feeling; for even when the three had left him and were on their way to the hotel they made no allusion to him, such as folks are wont to make when they have just left the society of one in whom they have a common interest. Mr. Josceline had merely observed indifferently, 'I think we may feel quite comfortable as to our young friend's getting out of the wood,' with reference to the snake-bite, and also by way of hint that there would be no necessity for making further 'kind inquiries,' and Mr. Felspar had answered, 'I think so, indeed;' which closed the subject. The conversation turned upon the beauties of the neighbourhood, and Ella expressed her desire to make an expedition some day to the Griffin's Head—not a public-house, but a promontory—the picture of which, among Mr. Felspar's fine collection, had struck her fancy most. He accompanied them to the hotel, where he left the drawings for Ella, and then took leave of them both; but when not a hundred yards on his way back he heard his name called out, and turning round, beheld Mr. Josceline coming after him. He stopped at once, which was fortunate, for that gentleman had become slow of movement from other causes than that of age, and in the present case a certain agitation of mind made him still more scant of breath than usual. Felspar noticed with surprise that he wore a grave and serious air which contrasted strangely with his accustomed tone of courteous frivolity.

'If you can give me five minutes' private conversation, Mr. Felspar,' he said, 'and will accommodate a gentleman who is not so young as he was, by sitting down on yonder bench, you will much oblige me.' The hotel grounds were not only what its advertisements had described, when they were on sale, as 'happily situated,' but were dotted about by innumerable benches and garden seats, placed in the most advantageous positions; some in the more retired spots, with a possible eye to the interchange of the feelings of the heart, and others to satisfy (so far as an extensive view could do it) the exactions of the soul. The one to which Mr. Josceline referred combined in some degree both these qualities. It crowned the summit of an elevation which afforded a fine prospect, and yet stood by itself apart from the carriage drive, on a little path that led nowhere else, under the shade of a noble tree.

In after years the scene often recurred to Felspar. The distant bay, the still more distant ships, the green hills sleeping in the sunshine, and the persuasive accents of an old world-wearied man speaking of one most dear to him, and whom he was about to leave for ever, in words that touched his heart like music, albeit with a false note that ran through all. 'Mr. Felspar,' he began, after a little pause, 'it is possible that I may be making a great

mistake in the confidence I am about to repose in you ; but I have been accustomed to study mankind, and believe I am speaking to a gentleman and a man of honour.'

'If I am not mistaken in myself, Mr. Josceline,' answered Felspar, quietly, 'I believe I would do nothing dishonourable.'

'And be sure I would not ask you to do so,' was the other's prompt and unexpected rejoinder ; and again there was a pause. 'The subject on which I desire to speak,' he resumed, 'is a delicate one, and the difficulty is greater because I am addressing a comparative stranger. It will be better, therefore, in the first place, to speak of the facts we know, or at least which *you* know. May I ask, Mr. Felspar, from what cause, or at whose instigation, my daughter was induced to draw that picture of the "Organ Boy"? The subject was not selected by chance,' he added confidently, and with a quick glance of suspicion at his companion ; 'of that I am certain.'

'It arose, Mr. Josceline, I have no doubt, in the conversation, yesterday, among the young people——'

'You mean Mr. Vernon, yourself, my daughter, and Miss Jennynge?' put in the other.

'Well ; I do not class myself among the young people,' said Felspar, smiling. 'I am not old, of course, but I am much older than they ; and there are circumstances—I have had, that is, more experience of life than most men of my years, and it has aged me.'

'You are a man of mature thought and fixed principles,' assented Mr. Josceline, gravely ; 'I have found out that for myself, or I should not now be addressing you. These young people, then, were talking about a subject for a picture?'

'They were talking about a picture which had been indicated to Vernon by his editor as the subject of a poem. I read the verses in question yesterday.'

'Written to order?' observed Mr. Josceline, with an elevation of his delicate eyebrows.

'Yes ; and, considering the circumstances, they do him great credit.'

'Possibly. Their appearance in print will no doubt also do him great credit. But we are not similarly situated, Mr. Felspar. What would be a credit to some people would be a discredit—or let me rather say, a serious disadvantage—to others.'

'I cannot pretend to be ignorant of the case to which you allude,' said Felspar, gently, 'and I must be allowed to say that I do not agree with you. What can there be disadvantageous—or, as I suppose you would put it, derogatory—in a young lady of whatever rank occupying herself with her pencil and obtaining praise for it—even public praise?'

'And payment?' inquired Mr. Josceline.

'Yes, in my opinion, and even payment. The artist, like any other labourer, is worthy of his hire.'

'Well ; we will not discuss that question, Mr. Felspar. You



are wide of the mark in supposing that I think the exercise of her artistic skill (if she possesses any) to be derogatory to my daughter's position; I will not even say it is unsuitable to it; but it is disadvantageous. Of that—at some pain to myself—I am about to convince you. It is probable that you have no very high opinion of birth and blood.'

Felspar moved his hand, and smiled.

'Just so; you would say, "You never said so;" in my presence you have too much delicacy of mind to express such views; but I am a pretty close observer of mankind, and I know I am right in my supposition: I have not the least desire to argue the matter; frankly indeed, though I may seem committed to the other view of the matter, we are, as it happens, agreed upon the point. We must, however, take the world as we find it. One of the many weaknesses of the aristocratic class is to despise work; to look down upon those who, either from necessity or independence of spirit, make their own living in the world, or even attempt to do so. I have no hesitation in saying that amongst the young men of that class it would be considered what they call "bad form" in my daughter Ella if she were known to be a contributor—for pay—to the columns of a magazine.'

'I can only say,' replied Felspar, grimly, 'that although you have guessed rightly as to my social views—which, indeed, are somewhat democratic—I should have hesitated to express such an opinion of our gilt youth; if you are right, they have much less sense than even I have given them credit for.'

'Whether your deduction is correct or not, Mr. Felspar, of the fact I am quite certain. Now, to be plain with you, my daughter will not be an heiress, or anything like it. I am a poor man.'

Felspar murmured a sympathising 'Indeed!' but, though he would have been ashamed to own it, the intelligence, while it surprised, did not displease him.

'On the other hand, my daughter is designed,' continued Mr. Josceline, 'not only by me, but by nature, to marry in her own rank of life. Her education has fitted her for it, her tastes are in accordance with it; and it is to a good marriage—I am very frank with you, you may say, but the more frank I am with you, remember, the higher compliment I pay you—I say it is to a good marriage that my daughter must trust for her future maintenance and happiness.'

'Happiness?' repeated Felspar, gently. 'A father of course should be the best judge of his daughter's character; but is a good marriage, as you term it, necessarily a happy marriage?'

'Not necessarily; no; but it at least presents more chance of happiness than a bad one. If my daughter married beneath her—I mean nothing offensive, believe me,' added Mr. Josceline, earnestly, 'I merely allude to the difference of various modes of life; she has been brought up tenderly, and is quite unfit to rough it—if she married a poor man, I repeat, though he had the

virtues of an Aristides, she would be miserable. I think I may be allowed to be a judge of this matter; but, whether or not, I intend that she shall run no risk of so marrying. Hence it is my desire to remove every obstacle that may interfere with her due establishment in life, and in my opinion—indeed, I am sure of it—this proposed connection of hers with paper and print would be an obstacle.’

Felspar bowed his head; his views upon that matter, it was evident, were not to be asked. Mr. Josceline waited in hopes, perhaps, that assistance should be volunteered, but he waited in vain.

‘You may naturally say to yourself, Mr. Felspar, “What is all this to me? Why, after a few hours’ acquaintanceship, does this garrulous old gentleman make me a confidant in his affairs in this entirely unsolicited manner? What do I care for him, or his daughter either?” Nay, permit me to finish’—for Felspar had been about to speak—‘I said you might naturally have so expressed yourself, whereas I ought to have said you might have good reason for doing so. “Naturally,” you never would. It is because your nature is, I am sure, a gentle and generous one, that I ventured to make this appeal to you. You have evidently great influence with your young friend, Mr. Vernon, and if you could convey to him, less directly than I have done, my views in this matter——’

Mr. Josceline paused by design; he saw that this reference to Vernon affected his young companion more nearly than anything he had yet said; and perhaps he looked for some revelation; if so, he was doomed to be disappointed.

‘But what has my friend to do with this affair, Mr. Josceline?’ inquired Felspar, drily. ‘He is not the editor of the “Keep-sake.” He can neither accept nor reject your daughter’s drawing. He has no more connection with it than he would have had with the drawing of the other artist if indisposition had not prevented him from executing it.’

‘That may be, Mr. Felspar, and the fact may be well understood by artists and authors. But if a picture drawn by my daughter is put in a magazine in illustration of certain verses written by Mr. Vernon, or *vice versâ*, some connection will, by the outside world at least, without doubt be taken for granted between artist and poet. I was in hopes that you would perceive this for yourself without my being compelled to make allusion to a circumstance so every way embarrassing; but it will be sufficient for my purpose I am sure that you perceive it now.’

It was Mr. Felspar’s turn to be embarrassed here; for, as a matter of fact, he had from the first foreseen, not indeed that others would have drawn any deduction from the contiguity of poem and picture, but that the fact of the two young people thus working together would induce companionship and friendship between them. Of Mr. Josceline’s pecuniary position he had of course

been ignorant, though he probably took for granted that gentleman's views on matrimony; but he had not deemed the disparity of fortune so insurmountable to his friend's hopes as Vernon himself felt it to be; while the chivalry of his own disposition compelled him to encourage them. In his heart he thought Ella Josceline the most glorious young creature that his eyes had ever beheld; but he had not confessed it, even to himself, and would have been slow indeed to confess it, as Vernon had done, to another. Having once been the recipient of his friend's confidence, it seemed to him that he was bound in honour to respect it even as regarded his own secret aspirations. He felt like a priest who under the seal of confession has been put in possession unawares of some design antagonistic to his own dearest interests, but which his sacred calling forbids him to oppose.

'I again repeat,' continued Mr. Josceline, finding that his companion made no reply, 'that no such association as I speak of in connection with the publication of my daughter's drawing may suggest itself to you. I am speaking of a class who have neither your depth, nor catholicity of thought, and whose minds are naturally inclined to personal gossip. I may claim to know them better than you do, and you must please to take the fact for granted. What I wish you to understand is, that it would not only be painful to myself but most detrimental to my daughter's prospects in life, should her name in any way be mixed up with that of this young Bohemian.'

Felspar's nature was a singularly just and fair one. He had not only the faculty of placing himself in the position of others—even of his opponents—but it would sometimes assert itself in spite of his efforts to hold his own views, and it did so now. He did not agree with Mr. Josceline; he thought his sentiments artificial and his principles unsound; but he was not sure, had their places been reversed, that he would not have exhibited the same prejudices, or even been moved by the same considerations. He felt, too, that he had no shadow of right to argue with this gentleman concerning the future of his daughter. He could, in fact, hardly advocate Vernon's cause against such an objector, but his loyalty to his friend compelled him to defend his character.

'Indeed, Mr. Josceline, you are mistaken in Vernon, if, as I gather, you apply the term "Bohemian" to him in a depreciatory sense. That he is almost entirely dependent upon his pen is true; but he has none of the faults and follies which are popularly ascribed to the literary calling. He is not reckless or extravagant, he is a man of high principle and exceptionally delicate feeling; generous and capable of self-sacrifice (as I happen to know) to an extent very rare in any of our sex, and rarest in a man so young. You pique yourself on your knowledge of your fellow-creatures; but if you have read Walter Vernon's character otherwise than I have described it, you are in error.'

To all this Mr. Josceline listened with patient and even rapt

attention, and it was with a certain gentle earnestness that he replied, 'I have not a word to say against your young friend, Mr. Felspar. He may possess all the virtues you ascribe to him; but that one admission of yours, "he is almost entirely dependent on his pen," states the whole case for me in a nutshell. Even if he were a man of genius, which you must forgive me for saying he is not, though he may be a very clever young fellow, my objections to him as a suitor for my daughter's hand—I am obliged, at some risk of appearing ridiculous, to take the worst for granted—would be insuperable, and any general impression that he aspired to such a position would, as regards her prospects, be almost as bad. I should leave Wallington Bay to-morrow, at whatever personal inconvenience, if I thought such a misfortune within the range of possibility.'

The idea of Mr. Josceline and his daughter departing from Wallington Bay was very painful to Mr. Felspar. He would rather have packed up his traps and taken Vernon with him (as he could have done by dropping a hint of the real state of the case) than have driven them to such an extremity. And, whether right or wrong, it was evident that his companion was in earnest and meant what he said.

'And what is it,' he inquired, gently, 'you would have me do, Mr. Josceline?'

'The favour I have to ask of you is this, Mr. Felspar. I wish you to take such measures as may preclude the possibility of my daughter's drawing appearing in the "Mayfair Keepsake." A depreciatory word from you—'

'I would not speak it for a thousand pounds,' interrupted Felspar; 'I hope I respect my own art too much to dream of such a baseness.'

'A baseness, Mr. Felspar?' echoed his companion with a tinge of colour in his pale face. 'I am not accustomed to suggest to my friends that they should perform base actions, even to do myself a service.'

'Of course not; it is only that you and I look upon this proposition with different eyes. Suppose you were a clergyman—'

'It is not necessary,' observed Mr. Josceline, rising, and speaking with great haughtiness, 'to argue the matter, Mr. Felspar. I have, I see, made a mistake in my judgment of your character, and I apologise for it.'

'Indeed, sir, I hope you have made no mistake in that,' returned Felspar in earnest conciliation, 'but only in the view taken by an artist of his professional duty. I will tell you frankly that entertaining a strong interest—natural, I hope, in one of my calling—in your daughter's drawing, it had been my intention to give it the benefit of my own experience. I should have touched it here and there so as to remove certain imperfections, and in such a manner, in short, as would probably have ensured its acceptance. But now that I have heard her father's views upon



the matter, it will go to the magazine as it is, and stand or fall by its own merits. I promise this upon my honour, but more than this my honour forbids me to promise.'

'Mr. Felspar,' said Mr. Josceline, holding out his hand, 'I thank you, and for two things. First, for having granted my request so far as your conscience permits you to do; and, secondly, for a lesson in good feeling. You are quite right, and I have been quite wrong. I feel that it is superfluous to ask a man like you to treat what I have said to you in the strictest confidence, but for my daughter's sake I do ask it.'

'Indeed, sir, it shall never pass my lips,' said his companion, earnestly.

'Once more, Mr. Felspar, thank you.'

They shook hands warmly, and parted; Mr. Josceline making his way up hill with scarcely slower steps than Felspar descended into the village. His mind was full of thought, partly, and after a while wholly, upon his friend's account; but partly, and for the moment, his thoughts wandered unbidden to himself and Ella. If her material expectations were indeed so small, his own were comparatively great: if, as we have said, he had chosen to confine himself to the more lucrative branch of his profession, he might have made a large income, and the prospect of such a prize as Ella would, he felt, have been temptation enough to have persuaded him to such a course. At all events, even to Mr. Josceline's eyes, his prospects would not have appeared so insignificant—certainly not so utterly hopeless—as those of Vernon; indeed it was plain that he had made a very favourable impression on Mr. Josceline, and one which, skilfully pushed, might possibly have made him think seriously of him as a son-in-law. It was curious that the feelings of Ella herself did not enter into these reflections of Felspar; but the fact was they were excluded partly by his own humility, partly by reverence for herself, and partly by the conviction that Vernon had already made an impression on them. As a rule, young men do not think themselves old so often as old men think themselves young, but such a thing does sometimes happen; the pursuits and amusements of the young no longer interested Felspar, though, like a veritable old man, he took pleasure in seeing them happy in their own way: his tone of thought was eminently mature, and, in comparison with Vernon, for example, it seemed to Felspar that he was a sort of Patriarch. Ella was bright and cheery as Vernon himself was, and 'let like mate with like' was, ere he reached the village, the sole sentiment in Felspar's mind, though, if he had expressed it, it would not have been without a sigh.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## A DOUBLE GAME.

It is the custom of the clergy to divide their congregations into the Evil and the Good, which is very convenient, and simplifies a somewhat abstruse matter exceedingly; but, unhappily, the Good—that is, the folks without evil in them (except that little modicum of original sin, which, in view of the immense amount of peccadilloes imported by mankind since that first cargo, may be disregarded)—are so very few that it is hardly worth while to address them from the pulpit at all, and more especially as they stand in no need of such exhortation. In the case of the vast majority even of church-goers, if the evil in them were represented by a black framework, as in a mourning envelope, we should see them, I am afraid, with a pretty broad border; only you and I, and half a dozen others of this congregation, perhaps, would be represented by what stationers call the ‘mitigated grief size’—perhaps a quarter of an inch. I suspect some people would exhibit scarcely enough of white envelope to write their direction upon. To this last class the moralist, if not the divine, would undoubtedly have relegated the Hon. George Emilius Josceline, and especially if he could have looked into his mind after that morning’s interview with Mr. Felspar, which had seemed to touch him to the very core, whereas what was uppermost in his thoughts, as he toiled up the hill towards his hotel, was the reflection that he had gained his end, and, to a certain extent, even outwitted his late companion. The artist had given his word not to put any finishing touches to Ella’s drawing; ‘and without them,’ reflected this unnatural father, ‘I should think even this twopenny-halfpenny magazine will never admit it into its columns.’

It is a sad thing to have to record of any parent that he should actually wish his daughter’s mental gifts to escape recognition; but Mr. Josceline’s case was not an unparalleled one. Poverty, like a distorting mirror, often makes what is fair seem foul to us. How often, for example, has a poor man cause to curse his daughter’s beauty! But what made Mr. Josceline’s case a bad one, rather than a hard one, was that his poverty had been brought about by his own hands, which had squandered his means in all sorts of unworthy ways. Truth to say, for all that was white on his envelope he was indebted to his daughter; that is to say, his love for her had cleared a space for itself, as it were, in the midst of his selfish recklessness, as though a dove should nestle on a rubbish heap. And, what was worst of all, though to him it did not appear so, the very plans he had in his mind for

her benefit were themselves far from what they should be; he was fixed on making her comfortable after his own ideas, no matter at what risk of soiling her white wings.

It may be thought that Mr. Josceline ran a great danger in reposing his confidence in a comparative stranger like Mr. Felspar; but the danger was greater than it looked. Short as his acquaintance had been with the young painter, he had gauged his character pretty accurately; and what he had heard of him—and he had made certain inquiries—had corroborated his own view. Moreover, if he were wrong; if Felspar and his friend were like most young men of their class—mere fortune hunters—the knowledge of the fact that Ella was portionless would at least put an end to all peril from that quarter, whatever mischief it might work (by the news getting abroad) in others. And, as Mr. Josceline thought, there *was* peril from that quarter. He had acknowledged to himself the attractions of Vernon (for he had been attracted, himself, towards him), and noticed the pleasure Ella derived from his society. He had thought the anxiety she had showed in connection with the adder's bite more significant even than it really was; he had been wont to see young ladies of her position take little services from young gentlemen (if they were 'ineligible') very coolly, and he did not understand how gratitude affects a pure and ingenuous nature. What had, however, alarmed him more than anything was the intelligence, received from Felspar himself, that his daughter's drawing had been directly suggested to her by Vernon. He had observed the 'pleased alacrity' with which she had set to work upon it the previous evening, and the diligence with which she had proceeded with it, and had wondered at the cause. And now he no longer wondered, but feared. It was not easy to alarm a mind so well balanced—in worldly scales—as his was; but he had become of late a prey to anxiety upon this subject, and the state of his health increased it. He had come to Wallington Bay as the place best adapted for a certain plan he had vaguely had in view, and this had already taken shape. It was of extreme importance—for his time was growing short—that nothing should interfere with it; hence his recent measure of precaution. With Vernon brushed aside, the road, though difficult, would at least be clear before him.

On his way back to the hotel, Mr. Josceline met Mrs. and Miss Jennynge 'going out for a promenade,' as the elder lady called it, in the grounds, for an appetite for their lunch; and with much politeness he offered to accompany them.

They accepted his offer with effusion. They congratulated themselves that they had announced their intention of not going far from home, since they had now a good cause for presenting themselves to the envious eyes of the other guests of the *Ultra-marine* (some of whom had already their noses flattened to the windows) in the company of 'the Hon. George Emilius,' as Mrs. Armytage was wont familiarly to speak of her new acquaintance,

To lookers-on, the mother on one side, the daughter on the other, were apparently engaging him in earnest conversation, though the elder lady was, in fact, the chief speaker.

'How wicked you are, Mr. Josceline,' said she, 'to make poor Mr. Felspar so idle! You should not thus misuse your social attractions; I saw you talking to him under the elm tree yonder for ever so long.'

'I had no idea that your eye was upon me, Mrs. Jennynge; but even if I had known it, my conscience would not have pricked me. If I did detain Mr. Felspar for five minutes, it was only from his luncheon.'

'He ought to have been at work upon my picture,' said Mrs. Jennynge, with a pretence at severity.

'Ah, that, indeed, would have been a pleasant occupation!' said Mr. Josceline, gaily; then suddenly reflecting that it was not Mrs. Jennynge's portrait, but her husband's on which the artist was engaged, he added, 'for it is no doubt a pleasure, though a mournful one, to embalm, as it were, the memory of the dead by one's imperishable pencil. It was upon the subject of art that we two were talking just now—or rather upon which he was talking and I was listening.'

'Oh, that was it, was it?' said Miss Jennynge, with a significant glance at her mamma. 'We could not think what it was that seemed to interest you both so much.'

Some people would have felt annoyed at being subjected to the sort of espionage to which the young lady had confessed so naively, but not so Mr. Josceline; he was not surprised, and was far from being displeased at it. It not only showed that his present companions took a personal interest in him, but proved that not a point would be missed in the part he was about to play.

'To you, Miss Jennynge,' he replied, 'who are, yourself, a devotee to art, no interest in that subject can appear exaggerated or misplaced.'

'Well, I don't know about that,' observed her mother, tartly; 'Anastasia keeps her spirits up uncommonly well for a devotee.'

The young lady looked up in some astonishment at this unexpected ebullition; but Mr. Josceline was not astonished. He perceived that the widow was jealous of the attention he was paying to Anastasia, of whom generally she stood in some fear.

'I don't think it is necessary, dear Mrs. Jennynge,' he said, soothingly, 'to be melancholy because we are devoted. In your case, for example—what is the matter?'

'Nothing; I fancied I heard that horrid Fido in our sitting-room.'

Mr. Josceline had also heard a dog bark; but he doubted that that had been the cause of Mrs. Jennynge's interruption. She wanted, as he guessed, to put a stop to any reference to her deceased husband, of whom in general she could never talk

enough; this he thought—combined with her jealousy—was a most encouraging sign.

‘Ah, Mr. Josceline!’ she continued, ‘you gentlemen little know what we ladies suffer.’

‘That is your own faults,’ answered Mr. Josceline, gallantly. ‘To us you always appear so beaming that we never think of the fortitude that has enabled you to hide your sorrows.’ And, while he addressed his voice to Mrs. Jennynge, he suffered his eyes to rest admiringly on Anastasia.

‘That is his horrid bark,’ cried the widow, with irritation—‘I thought I could not have been mistaken. He is shut up in our room all by himself, Anastasia, and will destroy your dear father’s precious portrait. I’ll just run in and let him out.’

‘How ridiculous mamma makes herself about that picture!’ exclaimed the young lady, when Mr. Josceline and she were left alone.

‘We must all have something to love, if it is but a memory,’ he returned, in a tone that was not only apologetic but even tender; and I am afraid, it must be confessed, that Mr. Josceline pressed—though almost imperceptibly—Anastasia’s arm.

‘Well, she has got *me*,’ returned the young lady with indignation.

Mr. Josceline was wondering within himself whether she was resenting that delicate pressure of the arm, or whether the movement had not been demonstrative enough to attract her attention.

‘That is true, my dear young lady, and to most people it would be enough. To some people, indeed, it would be all sufficient. But your mother is peculiar.’

‘Very,’ assented Anastasia, sharply. ‘She is so imprudent, for one thing. The idea of her coming out on the terrace, here, at her time of life, without a shawl! She can never be persuaded that she is no longer young.’

‘Ah, that is what we old folks cling to—our youth,’ observed Mr. Josceline, gently. ‘To you, who are still in the enjoyment of it, and who possess all that makes life worth having—health, beauty, and accomplishments—you cannot understand us, Miss Jennynge.’

‘No, I can’t,’ said Anastasia, flatly. ‘I think mamma ought to know better than to be affecting to be my age.’

‘Which is three-and-twenty?’ hazarded Mr. Josceline, though he judged her to be five years older at the very least.

‘I am three-and-twenty next birthday,’ replied Anastasia, without moving a muscle.

‘I thought so; I am generally pretty correct in my guesses at age,’ returned her companion. ‘I wish I were a younger man,’ he added, regretfully.

‘A man, I have read, is as old as he feels,’ returned the young lady, much mollified; ‘a woman as old as she looks. Now my mother looks sixty if she looks a day—— But, there she comes;’

and Mrs. Jennynge reappeared from the house, though, as it happened, only to call them in to luncheon.

Upon the whole Mr. Josceline flattered himself he had done a good stroke of business. It was true he had found Anastasia very resentful of the attentions he had been paying for the last day or two to her mother. It could not but be to her disadvantage that that lady should think of marrying again; but that she should so openly have hinted her disgust at any such idea—for that that was what she meant when she spoke of her mother's affecting youthfulness he was certain—was very satisfactory to him; it showed that the possibility of that lady's being married for the third time had presented itself to Anastasia, and how much more, therefore, must it have done so to the widow herself. His own little attentions to the young lady—and it must be admitted that he took some pleasure in paying them; the cajolment of young women was a habit with him, and pleased him, even though nothing came of it, just as writing a sonnet, though not designed for publication, pleases a bard—had, indeed, been somewhat icily received, though he felt that just at last there had been symptoms of a thaw; but he had had no object in them beyond throwing her off her guard, and, if possible, diverting the suspicions of other people into a wrong direction.

In this he had been successful even beyond his hopes. For Mrs. Armytage had had her eyes glued to the window-pane of her private sitting-room which commanded the terrace throughout the interview. Her exclamations of contempt at Mr. Josceline's familiarity with the widow were forcible and frequent. 'How can he so demean himself? What a fool he is making of that old woman!' &c. &c.; but when Mrs. Jennynge had left him, and she observed the attentions he was paying to Anastasia, she was even still more scandalised—by Anastasia.

'What a forward minx! There is no knowing what a girl may not do with an old man if she throws herself at him like that. I think it is my bounden duty as a matron—and the only one qualified to advise that sweet young creature—to warn Miss Josceline of her father's peril.'

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE LOST LOCKET.

THOUGH the luncheon-bell had rung, Ella did not make her appearance at the *table-d'hôte*—a circumstance which would have annoyed and perhaps even alarmed her father, but for the fact that others also had failed to appear there as usual. Mr. Aird and Davey were absentees, and Mr. Josceline had been informed by Mrs. Trant that his daughter had left the hotel only a few



minutes before his own return thither, accompanied by the younger gentleman. Where Mr. Aird was she did not know, and it had struck her that this was the first occasion on which she had seen the little fellow out of his father's company. He had come in by himself, it seemed, and then departed almost immediately with Ella.

'I am afraid it's an elopement,' observed Mrs. Jennynge, with a little giggle, as she dissected a prawn; 'you really ought to have put a stop to the flirtation between those two young people earlier, Mr. Josceline.'

Mrs. Armytage had it on the tip of her tongue to say, 'Don't *you* talk; you've got a daughter of your own to look after;' but she restrained herself with an effort. It made her angry, however, to remark that Mr. Josceline—who perhaps felt that he owed the widow some reparation for his recent conduct to her—laughed at this sally very much.

'It would have shown more prudence in the young lady,' observed Mrs. Armytage, 'if she had run away with the father instead of the son. I understand Mr. Aird is immensely rich.'

The observation was intentionally a disagreeable one. Mrs. Armytage had meant to give Mr. Josceline what she called a rap on the knuckles for his encouragement of those vulgar Jennyngees, but she had no idea how tender his knuckles were. She had inadvertently suggested the very thing which he had been revolving in his own mind, but which he was especially solicitous to prevent occurring to anyone else. Without so much as a wince, however, he replied indifferently, 'Well; I don't much believe in the great fortune of retired Indians; one hears of their having so many laks of rupees, but it often turns out that they have a lack of pounds sterling. The day for the shaking of the Pagoda tree has gone by.'

'But it had not gone by when Mr. Aird first stood at the foot of it,' returned Mrs. Armytage.

'After all, *what* is money?' ejaculated Mrs. Jennynge, sentimentally.

'I should like to know what some of us would be without it?' remarked her rival, contemptuously.

Poor Mrs. Jennynge felt the dart, and also her incapacity to hold her own in single combat with her enemy; she was sorry she had spoken, but she could not let the ball rest where it had been flung—that is, in her own lap. 'I mean what is money, after all, without other things to enable us to enjoy it?' she stammered out. 'Without health, for instance; poor Mr. Aird—and indeed little Davey also—is a case in point.'

'That doesn't militate against his being a good match,' insisted Mrs. Armytage; 'indeed, quite the contrary.'

'What sentiments!' exclaimed Anastasia.

'Yes; it's very fine,' snapped Mrs. Armytage, with the quickness and fire of a lucifer match—and by no means one of those

that can 'only light upon its own box'—'but all of us are not all poetry and romance like you, Miss Jennynge; it's wonderful to me—though very creditable to yourself—that you should have retained your simplicity so long.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Wallace, gently, in the pause that followed this onslaught—which, to say truth (in conjunction with her tight lacing and the prawns), had taken all the breath out of poor Anastasia, 'for my part, the longer I live the more I like simplicity.'

'Ah, but you've no girls to marry!' rejoined Mrs. Armytage, tartly.

'That's true,' sighed Mrs. Wallace; her thoughts at once transporting her far from the present scene to a distant grave.

'Indeed,' said Mrs. Percival-Lott, taking courage from the number of her allies to cast her stone at the common enemy, 'I don't see why you should take such mercenary views of your own sex, Mrs. Armytage.'

'Of course not, because you've caught a husband,' was the swift rejoinder; 'if you were upon your promotion you would probably be looking after the loaves and fishes like any other young woman.'

The suspected bride turned scarlet; nor was her confusion mitigated by the circumstance that her husband, tickled, perhaps, by some reminiscences of his courting days, broke out into a little chuckle.

'Upon my word,' said Mr. Josceline, smiling, 'I shall rise and fly, Mrs. Armytage, for fear it may be the time for the males to come next under your castigation.'

'No, no; I have not a word to say against *them*,' returned the lady addressed; 'they are naturally simple, and therefore one never finds them making a pretence of being so. For my part, I don't believe in a designing man.'

'You are wrong, there, madam—or rather as far from right as it is possible you can be,' said Mr. Josceline, politely. 'Do you think the Professor, for instance, has never been designing?'

'Eh, what?' exclaimed that learned man, looking up from a brown study of the deepest tint, and seeing Mr. Josceline with his hand upon his half-pint of sherry; 'no, I thank you, not at this time of day.'

'Very likely,' laughed Mr. Josceline, rising from his chair; 'but a little earlier, perhaps, it was different.'

And in the general peal of laughter evoked by the Professor's mistake Mr. Josceline escaped from the room with considerable self-congratulation. If Mrs. Armytage's suspicions were aroused in one direction respecting him, it was clear that they were cast asleep in another.

Meanwhile Ella is wandering by the seashore, far from the hotel (and lunch), with little Davey's hand fast clasped in hers; their eyes are fixed on the lessening sand—for the tide is rising—

with eager intentness, and every piece of tangled weed and sea-sworn rock is being examined by them as for lost treasure.

She had found the little fellow in tears just leaving the hotel, to which he had come back from his usual morning walk only a few minutes, and in reply to her compassionate inquiry had told her his pitiful story.

'Poor papa has met with a great misfortune, Miss Josceline,' he had sobbed out.

'Good heavens! But let us send him help,' cried Ella, at once imagining that he had been cut off in some bay by the sea, or had fallen over a cliff and broken his leg.

'No, no; nobody can help him; I was not to tell anybody,' he said; 'only I am sure he would let me tell you. *You* would not steal anything that belonged to anybody else, even if you found it, would you, Miss Josceline?'

'Indeed, I hope not, my dear. But what has your father lost? His purse?'

'Oh, no; I don't think he would care for that one half as much. It is his locket with mamma's picture in it; he used to wear it on his watch-chain, you know.'

Ella remembered that he wore a locket of a heart-shape in dead gold—indeed Mrs. Armytage had once made a flippant allusion to it that Mr. Aird had resented extremely—and she said so. 'Now be very careful, Davey. Where did you walk to-day? I mean, which was the exact path you took up to the moment your father missed the locket?'

'Oh, it's no use, Miss Josceline. I came back along it myself, and it was nowhere to be seen. Papa thought it just possible that he might have left it at home on his dressing-table, and sent me back to look; and if it wasn't there I was to go back to him.'

'But, my dear child, you have not had your lunch, and you look fagged and tired as it is.'

'Oh, but I had rather go back to papa. *I must go!*'

'Very good, then I will go with you; only you shall have a bag of biscuits to put in your pocket, to eat as you go along.'

Thus provisioned, off they started, beginning to examine the ground from the first moment, and keeping as closely as Davey could recollect to the path his father had taken. The pair had ventured on a longer walk than usual, to a promontory called the Monkshead, and about half-way thither Mr. Aird had discovered his loss.

'Did you take the cliff path, or go by the sands, Davey?'

'We took the cliff path; only once we dipped down to the sands in Abbot's Creek.'

'And you came back by yourself exactly the same way?'

'No, I did not come by the Creek at all, because I wanted to be quick.'

'Then, depend upon it, the locket is in the Creek, Davey.'

'No; papa thought not; he fancied he had seen it after we

had climbed the cliff again, and it is on the cliff that he is looking for it.'

'However, he may be mistaken; and, whether he is or not, we will try the Creek, because our only chance of finding the locket there is to do so at once; the tide is coming in, and if it once flows over it, it is gone for ever; whereas on the cliff it may be found at any time, and the folks about Wallington are honest people, I think, notwithstanding your father's fears, and whoever finds it is sure to bring it to the hotel.'

This argument carried conviction with it even to little Davey; but the boy was tired and fagged, and his grief on his father's account had also helped to exhaust the little strength he had. Ella could judge of Mr. Aird's anxiety about the locket, from his having for the moment lost sight of the weakness of his child, in thus telling him to return to him after so long a walk. She would have made him sit down where he was and gone on by herself, but for the necessity of having the exact route pointed out to her which his father had taken. A sudden thought, however, struck her.

'Can you ride pick-a-back, Davey?'

'Oh, yes; I often do upon papa's back, when I feel tired.' So Ella knelt down and, though the path was steep and the day was hot, she took him on her shoulders, and there he sat, eating steadily through his bag of biscuits, and with his little legs clinging tightly round her neck, like the old man of the sea in the story of 'Sinbad the Sailor.'

For some time he went on directing her footsteps in childish contentment, but presently—his last biscuit having been disposed of—he whispered in his thin treble, 'Ain't 'oo tired, Miss Josceline? I can walk now.'

She was very tired, but assured him, with a kiss, that he was as light as a feather; and so she toiled on till they reached Abbot's Creek. Here she let him down, for she could not carry him down the cliff, and on the smooth and still hard sand of the bay, it was easy walking for him. They looked for what they sought in vain, until they had almost reached the place where they had to ascend again, when a bright something, looking like the sparkle of the sundew, attracted her quick eye. On the very verge of the line of the encroaching sea, and far below high-water mark, was the gold locket, sticking edgeways in the sand, where it had of course fallen without the least noise.

'Oh, how glad papa will be!' cried Davey, clapping his little hands; 'and but for you, Miss Josceline, we should never have found it.'

'You dear boy!' cried she, almost as pleased as himself at her success, and touched also with the child's manner and good feeling; 'you must do one thing in return for this little service; you must not call me Miss Josceline any more, but Ella, and you must give me a kiss.'

'You dear, good Ella,' he said, putting up his weary-looking but happy face to meet her embrace. 'Oh, how pleased dear papa will be!'

To a kind heart there is no errand so pleasant as to carry to another some good news; and leaving the child safely ensconced under the shade of a rock upon the beach, 'to be left till called for,' Ella at once proceeded to toil up the cliff in search of Mr. Aird.

If Mrs. Armytage, or even Mrs. Jennynge, had seen her at it, they would probably have expressed disapprobation; they would have thought it perhaps 'a little imprudent' in her—if they had known her circumstances they would certainly have called it 'bold'—thus to seek an interview with the widower alone; whereas the motive that was actuating Ella was simply what would have urged her in the scriptural sense to visit 'the widow.' To think of the desolate old man wandering on the downs yonder, looking for the lost memorial of his dead wife, touched her with pity.

In a few minutes more she had caught sight of him at no great distance, coming slowly towards her, with head depressed, and suggesting, as it seemed to her, by his very gait the distress and melancholy of his mind. Presently he looked up, probably for the return of Davey, and perceived her waving her handkerchief towards him—a signal which the female oracle of the *Ultramarine* would have reprobated exceedingly; to her it would have seemed only one step short of 'throwing the handkerchief.' The sign, as Ella intended it, was at once understood; the bowed figure straightened itself, and came on towards her at greatly increased speed.

'I have found it, Mr. Aird!' she cried, as he got within hailing distance; 'your locket is quite safe.'

She held the trinket out to him, and fixing his eyes on it, without even glancing at her, he took it from her hand and pressed it to his lips. 'Thank Heaven,' he exclaimed fervently, 'thank Heaven!' then, turning to her with a look of tender gratitude, strange to see on his lined and dusky face, he added, 'And thank you, Miss Josceline, who are Heaven's messenger.'

Extravagant as were his words, it was evident they were not spoken in the way of compliment; the tears were in the old man's eyes as he uttered them.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MR. AIRD'S LOVE STORY.

So intense was Mr. Aird's emotion that Ella, unwilling to be the witness of what he might afterwards feel to be a weakness, was



about to turn back and leave him; but he stopped her with a gesture of his hand.

‘Do not go, dear, good young lady; you must not go till I have thanked you. I cannot say how much sorrow you have saved me; my child told you what had happened, I conjecture, and having found the locket where I hoped, yet hardly dared to hope, I had left it, you came yourself to save him so long a walk.’

‘I wish I had, Mr. Aird,’ she answered, smiling; ‘but the fact is the locket was not in your room, and, as Davey<sup>\*</sup> seemed so distressed at the loss of it, I came back with him to look for it. I wish I could have spared him the fatigue, but he was necessary as a guide, you see; and I have left him safe enough, though very tired, poor little fellow, beside a rock in the Creek yonder.’

‘Then you have come all this way with him to look for this?’

‘Well, it was not so very far; but my fear was that you had dropped it on the sands, as indeed you did.’

‘Then but for you,’ said the old man with a glance over the cliff, ‘the tide would have covered it by this time. Did you open the locket, Miss Josceline?’

‘I? Certainly not,’ said Ella, with a little flush.

‘Then, if you don’t mind sitting here for a few minutes, you shall see it now; I owe it to you, or rather to myself, in explanation of the weakness I have shown, and the exhibition of which I know you would have spared me. This is the portrait of my darling wife, and the mother of my only child.’

He placed the open locket in her hand. The picture it contained was the portrait of a young woman anything but beautiful; the face, indeed, was slightly pitted with the smallpox; the blue eyes were soft and gentle, but they conveyed the idea of one who has suffered much. The expression was one of serene content, as of one who, having known what it is to live and endure, has found, deservedly, her home in heaven.

‘It is a sweet-looking face indeed,’ said Ella.

‘Yes; but not pretty. It is seldom, though I have seen it once,’ said the old man, softly, ‘that to those who have the gift of beauty, God also adds that of gentleness and goodness. When I first saw it, there was no attraction in that face for me. Her name was Edith Trenton; I went out to India with her, in the same ship, and also with her cousin, another Edith, and bearing the same surname; and that second Edith was my first love. I was a poor man then, and she was poor also; very literally her face was her fortune. The gossips on board said she had come out to India as being the best market for it. To me such talk was blasphemy, but I had no right to resent it. I felt that a union between her and me was impossible. She had been brought up in luxury, and I had nothing to offer her except my love; I therefore strove to conceal it; if I did not do so it was no fault of mine, yet I believe she guessed it. We parted at

Calcutta; she and her cousin had a home there which had been offered them by her aunt, the widow of a rich civilian; and I went my way to my work, hundreds of miles up the country. I had at that time no prospects; but the chief English resident of the place where I was stationed and my immediate superior, in a few months died suddenly, and, to my astonishment and delight, I was offered his post. The delight was mainly caused by the conviction that I was now in a position to declare my love for Edith. I wrote to her immediately announcing the good fortune that had happened to me, assuring her how in secret I had always worshipped her, explaining the reasons that had hitherto kept me silent, and expressing a hope, from certain signs I had construed in my favour, that she was not altogether indifferent to me. In case this was so, as I prayed it might be, I ventured to beg her to come to me, as I could not go to her, and I enclosed an invitation from the wife of the English chaplain of my district that she should be her guest till we were married.

‘In course of post I received a letter from Edith that filled my soul with joy. She acknowledged that she had always loved me, though she protested, with what I took for woman’s coyness, that she had been in doubt as to whether her love was reciprocated. As she had now no doubt, and as she felt she could not do too much to promote my wishes in return for the happiness my letter had given her, she acceded to my proposal of coming up the country and taking advantage of the hospitality that had been offered her. She also candidly owned that her home in Calcutta was not a pleasant one, and that she felt no regrets at leaving it. I have got that letter now, dear to me as on the day when it promised me possession of my beautiful bride, but in the meantime I confess I have looked at it with other eyes. Edith Trenton arrived in due course; but imagine my chagrin and embarrassment on finding that it was not my Edith but her cousin. I don’t suppose that any man was ever placed in circumstances so perplexing and painful; my first duty, however, I felt, was to save an unprotected and orphan girl from the distress of mind that must ensue upon her discovery of such a mistake. Fortunately her arrival was earlier by some hours than had been expected, and the chaplain kindly rode out to me to the village where I was engaged upon my duties to inform me of it.

“How is she looking?” cried I rapturously; “and is she not charming?”

“Yes,” said he, “she is charming. She has a sweet expression.”

“But is she not beautiful?” I reiterated, with a lover’s pride. “I thought you admired dark beauties.”

“I don’t call Miss Trenton dark,” said he; “and to be candid with you, my dear fellow, I think love has blinded you to her mere physical charms; she has, however, as it seems to me, the beauty of the soul, which is far better; she sent you her dear

love, and, by-the-bye, she gave me this letter, which she thought would give you pleasure to read as you came along."

'The letter was from *my* Edith, wishing me every happiness on my approaching union. She herself, she said, had been married some six weeks to a Captain Pipon—which, of course, was the reason why my letter had been placed in her cousin's hands, instead of her own. For the moment I was stunned, but all the time I was riding home—though my companion ascribed my taciturnity to a very different cause—I was schooling myself to adopt such a behaviour as should prevent this poor girl's eyes being opened to the real state of the case. As her cousin was another's, it did not seem to me much matter whether I was married or not; while the difference to Miss Trenton would be prodigious. I never could send her back to Calcutta, scorned and miserable, to be the object of ridicule to society, and an unwelcome burden replaced upon the shoulders of her aunt. Moreover, although I had, as I thought, only paid her the usual attentions of a gentleman upon the voyage out, I now remembered that they had been accepted very graciously. She had doubtless taken them for more than I had intended; while I, on the other hand, had underrated her kindly feelings towards myself. I am thankful to say that from the moment when I gave her my first kiss of welcome, to that in which I pressed my lips to her dear eyes closed in death, she was never undeceived.'

'You behaved well and nobly, Mr. Aird,' said Ella; 'and I am sure you were repaid for it.'

'My dear young lady, I was repaid ten thousand fold. In a little while my wife taught me to love her for herself, and after a time to adore her. I never envied Captain Pipon his prize. Day by day, and week by week, I grew to love my Edith more and more, till Fate, jealous as it seemed that a mere mortal—and it must be owned an unworthy one—should enjoy such happiness, snatched my darling from me. Davey is all that is now left to me of her save this portrait, which your great kindness has preserved to me. I would rather have lost a limb than have been deprived of it.'

To Ella, who beheld his face as it bent rapturously over his restored treasure, it was easy to believe his words.

'And did Mrs. Pipon ever know?' inquired Ella.

The old man smiled as he looked up at her.

'You are, I perceive, a daughter of Eve, after all,' he said. 'Yes, she did. Of that I am sure, though no one else could have been. Neither to me, nor to any other person, did she ever breathe one word of that mistake which might have been so fatal. She was not one to boast of her triumphs. I did not need to know *you*, Miss Josceline, to be assured that all women are not like those down yonder.' And he pointed disdainfully in the direction of the hotel.

'Our friends at the *Ultramarine* may be better folks at heart,

Mr. Aird, than you imagine,' said Ella, smiling. 'It is only manner——'

'You may just as well say,' interrupted the old man, impatiently, 'that my lined and wrinkled face is no indication of loss and trouble—not to mention of testiness of disposition, a duplicate liver, and general unsuitableness for civilised society. Your politeness will not allow that? Well, then, you may just as well say that your own sweet face is no exponent of the gentleness and goodness of the heart within. But you look pale; I fear you are tired with your long walk; you did not, I do hope, come out before you had had your lunch?'

'I don't think that two hours of abstinence will do me much harm,' replied Ella, smiling. But, in fact, though hitherto excitement had supported her, she was both fatigued and faint. 'Let us go down to poor Davey, who will begin to think himself deserted.'

'True; the darling boy!' said the old man, tenderly. But, though he spoke of his child, there was another who now shared his anxieties.

'No, you must not go down, dear young lady. That will be an unnecessary fatigue. Walk slowly on along the cliff, and I will join you with the child. It is selfish of me to ask you to wait for us; but old Indians, as you must have heard, are always selfish, and I cannot deprive myself of the rare pleasure of your company.'

Certainly if Mrs. Armytage had beheld him, as he thus addressed her young friend in the tenderest of tones, she would have ejaculated, 'Well, I never!' at the very least. For her own part, Ella would have preferred to get home at once, where she knew her father would be waiting for her with some anxiety; but she could hardly refuse Mr. Aird so small a favour. She waited accordingly for him and Davey, her mind occupied with that strange story of the two Ediths, at which—though it had such strong points of humour about it—the manner of the narrator had overcome in her all temptation to smile.

Love, it seemed then, was more Protean than she had imagined. It did not assume one shape only. It was not always necessary to fall over head and ears into it; you might gradually slip into it with the same result! How different Mr. Aird's experience had been from all she had heard and read of it! In what unlooked-for places, it seemed, was to be found Romance! The very last man in the world whom she would have credited with a love story was this man. How strange it was, too, that one so reticent should have thus made her his confidante, and that without laying any injunction of secrecy on her! Of course she would never tell it to any one who would speak of it again, but she knew her father was to be trusted; he was a man who could discourse upon an infinity of topics, and was therefore never driven to do so upon those which were inopportune or indiscreet. She



thought she would tell him what she had heard, for two reasons: first, because it would lead him to think kindly of Mr. Aird, in whom she herself now felt a strong personal interest; and, secondly, because the recital might make him speak of his own past and his own love. Why was it that he never spoke of her mother, about whom she longed to hear, yet did not dare to inquire? What was it that sealed his lips? She had often thought of this before with a certain feeling of discomfort and apprehension. It was a subject that attracted her, but, somehow or other, one she never dared to dwell upon. The same feeling possessed her now, and it was almost a relief to her when the thread of her thoughts was broken by the appearance of Mr. Aird and Davey.

‘So,’ said the former, softly, as soon as he recovered breath from the ascent, ‘I find that, though Miss Josceline went without her luncheon to-day, she took care to provide some for her little companion.’

‘It was not much of a lunch,’ said Ella, laughing; ‘we had only some dry biscuits, had we, Davey?’

‘I had some; I was so hungry that I eat ’em all myself,’ said the child naïvely; ‘you had none, Ella.’

‘Ella, indeed!’ exclaimed Mr. Aird. ‘Why don’t you say “Miss Josceline,” Master Impudence?’

‘She told me to say Ella, papa: it’s prettier, and I like it far better.’

‘Oh, it’s prettier, no doubt,’ laughed Mr. Aird; ‘very pretty! But I can imagine somebody whom you and I know, Miss Josceline, observing if she heard it, “What a very ill-mannered, forward child!”’

The imitation of Mrs. Armytage’s tone was not very accurate, but it was recognisable. Mr. Aird generally treated her in her absence with silent contempt; but he was evidently in the best of spirits, and, as it seemed to Ella, coming out in a new character in all directions.

‘Well, my dear Davey,’ he continued, cheerfully, ‘you are stepping out like a little man. I should never have guessed that you had walked twice over this ground already.’

‘I didn’t walk back, papa; I felt very tired, so Ella carried me pick-a-back almost all the way.’

‘Pick-a-back?’ exclaimed the old gentleman in amazement. ‘What, did you *carry* the child? But I need not ask. I will not say you carried him on your shoulders, Miss Josceline, but between your pinions.’

‘For a gentleman who never pays compliments, as I have heard you say yourself, Mr. Aird,’ said Ella, laughing, ‘that is very pretty.’

‘I am glad you think so,’ said the old man, quietly; ‘but it is not a compliment, my dear young lady; for that you are an angel is the simple truth—— See, there’s your father on the hotel



terrace with the telescope. He is sweeping the landscape for his sunbeam.'

Apparently he found it; for presently they saw him coming out to meet them.

'Mr. Josceline,' said Mr. Aird, gravely, as he drew near, 'I owe you an apology for having deprived you so long of your daughter's society, and if I were in your place I should not easily accept it. But she has been engaged in a work of true Christian charity, I do assure you.'

'If she has done you any service, Mr. Aird, I am sure I do not grudge you her company,' was the gracious reply.

'She has done me a very great service, Mr. Josceline,' answered the other, earnestly; 'and, though it may be but an indifferent exchange for losing your good company even for an hour, she has made of the humble individual who addresses you a friend for life.'

It was curious, though Mr. Aird had the same intention—namely, of conveying his gratitude—how different was his expression of it from what it had been to Ella herself; it had then been natural, it was now formal and stilted; notwithstanding which, strange to say, he conferred at least as much pleasure in the one case as he had in the other.

'One would be really almost inclined to think,' was Mr. Josceline's private reflection, 'that, after all, there is such a thing as a special Providence.'

Except for a certain complacency, however, which he could not altogether banish from his countenance, he showed no sign of exultation at the way which Ella had evidently made in Mr. Aird's good graces. He even affected to treat the matter with the same light-hearted indifference with which he received—or appeared to receive—all other tidings.

'Why, Ella, you little puss,' he said, as soon as they were alone, and while she was partaking of the meal of which she really stood in need in their own apartment; 'what spell have you been throwing round our friend, Mr. Aird, that has thus enchanted him?'

'It is only that I had the opportunity of doing him a slight service,' she answered modestly.

'It seems to have been a "secret service," then; for he was evidently disinclined to talk about it,' replied Mr. Josceline. 'Of course, if it is anything very delicate and confidential,' he added, airily, 'I must not be too curious.'

'Well, it *was* something delicate, or rather, which had reference to a delicate matter, papa; yet I don't think he would mind your knowing it, if it went no further.' And then she told him the whole story.

'It is most interesting, I am sure, my dear Ella,' was his remark when she had quite concluded—and indeed he had listened to her with a patience and attention which he seldom awarded to

long narratives from anybody—‘and I need not say that by me this revelation of Mr. Aird’s domestic romance will be held sacred. To my mind it does him infinite credit. Gad! it must have been rather embarrassing for him when the blonde arrived (*not* “per invoice”) instead of the brunette, eh?’

‘Oh, papa; don’t laugh. If you had seen poor Mr. Aird’s face when he was telling me about it!’

‘I’m glad I didn’t, my dear; it’s not everybody that has your command of countenance. How very much in love the chaplain’s wife must have thought him, to have described the young lady so much above her physical merits! I am not laughing now, Ella. I only allowed myself to imagine the situation for one fleeting instant. I think it was most laudable, and showed the man—for one thing—to be a thorough gentleman.’

‘Mr. Aird is certainly that, papa.’

‘It struck me so the moment I set eyes on him; his constant solicitude for his boy, too, convinced me that he had a tender heart. The poor boy is very delicate; I should almost doubt,’ added Mr. Josceline, reflectively, ‘his ever living to grow up.’

‘Oh, papa; don’t talk like that! It would break his father’s heart. And Davey is such a charming child.’

‘Just so; and he is evidently as attached to you as though you were his second mother. Both father and son have excellent taste, that’s certain.’

‘But it made me quite uncomfortable, papa, to hear Mr. Aird express his thanks; they were so out of all proportion to the service rendered.’

‘Such a conviction, my dear,’ returned Mr. Josceline, earnestly, ‘is the unfailing index of a generous nature. But, at the same time, it is not everybody who would have walked for miles on a day like this, and gone without their lunch, too, to oblige a comparative stranger. He feels, no doubt, as though he could never do enough for you—and quite right too.’

‘My dear papa!’

‘The fact is, my dear Ella, you don’t appreciate your own position. If a young man had done it, it would have been nothing, or next to nothing; if a girl like Miss Jennynge had done it (though, as a matter of fact, she would have seen him at York first), it would have been civil, and that’s all; but for you—’

‘Well, really, papa,’ interrupted Ella, laughing, ‘I don’t see why the action was more meritorious in my case than it would have been in hers.’

‘That is just what I complain of; you do not understand your own superiority. Now, Mr. Aird, I am happy to say, did. He knows that nature intended you not to run on errands, but to have services rendered you by other people. He is a man whose judgment I applaud, and whose virtues I revere. You may depend upon it, Ella, that man was an excellent husband.’

‘I feel sure of that, papa.’

‘He didn’t fall in love with his wife, you see, at first sight—though he indulged in that folly with somebody else, which came, as it almost always does come, to nothing—but he grew to love her day by day, and year by year. That is the true secret of married happiness.’

‘I suppose it is,’ said Ella, thoughtfully. She was wondering what was the secret of her father’s marriage, and whether that had resulted in happiness or not. His present vein of philosophy was altogether new to her, nor did she understand its purport.

‘Then, another thing which strikes me as an important feature in Mr. Aird’s case,’ he continued, ‘and which should be a lesson to all young people, is that Duty itself proved the gateway to Love, though it did not seem at first to lead thither. The whole story is, in fact, not only, as I have said, most interesting, but also most noteworthy; and now, dear, that you have had your lunch, and listened so patiently to my sermon, you can run upstairs and take off your bonnet.’

Mr. Josceline had an idea that young women were more given to reflection in their own rooms than elsewhere; and he had his reasons for giving his daughter an opportunity for thinking over what he had said to her, and perhaps of giving it a personal application.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### ILLNESS IN THE HOTEL.

ON the way to her room, Ella met Davey’s ayah—a black nurse called Abra, who, with the servants at the *Ultramarine*, was the cause of as great excitement (not unmingled in their case with alarm) as were Mr. and Miss Josceline to their masters and mistresses; she looked as white as a black woman could, and in a state of extreme agitation. ‘Oh, mees,’ she cried, ‘Masser Davey is taken ill; I am going for his papa.’

‘But you have surely not left the child alone?’

‘No, no; a kind lady is with him,’ and she pointed to the nursery door, and fled downstairs as fast as the peculiarity of her attire—which resembled a night-dress over a dressing-gown—would permit.

By Davey’s bedside was Mrs. Wallace, whom the nurse had called in to her assistance. It was not unusual for the child to be put to bed in the day-time, but on this occasion it was clear that he was not fit to be anywhere else; his little face was pinched with pain, and his little hands like coals of fire.

‘I am better now,’ he answered to Ella’s affectionate inquiry;

'but I was cold and my teeth did chatter so that Abra was frightened. Now I'm quite warm.'

Mrs. Wallace and Ella interchanged meaning looks. 'Davey is a little over-tired,' said the former, assuringly; 'papa will come up and kiss him, and then he will go off to sleep, and wake up quite well.'

'My head, my head!' moaned the little patient, whom this agreeable programme seemed utterly to fail to cheer.

'Is it fever?' inquired Ella in a whisper.

'Yes; no doubt. I think, dear Miss Josceline, if you sent for Dr. Cooper at once it would be our best plan.'

'Let Ella stay here; I like Ella,' murmured the child. 'I like you too, Mrs. Wallace,' he added, and it was plain the effort to be thus considerate cost him something; 'but Ella is so pretty.'

'He is quite right,' said Mrs. Wallace, smiling. 'It would be a waste to send Ella on a message when an ugly old woman like me could do it just as well; would it not, Davey?'

'Es it would,' said Davey. And the kind old face (which had beauty in it too—for wiser eyes) gave place to the young one beside his pillow.

She returned presently with the ayah, and the news that Mr. Aird had gone out immediately after luncheon, and was not to be found. It was unusual for him to do so; but, as Ella guessed, his feelings having been deeply moved by the recital of the morning, he had probably preferred to pass an hour or two somewhere in solitude.

The child dropped into an uneasy slumber, in which he continued till the Doctor came. Mrs. Wallace explained to him in a few words what had happened, and then he proceeded to make his professional examinations.

Davey cried a little on being woke—which with him was itself a sign of mischief, for the child was not given to tears—but presently dropped off again.

'What is it, Doctor?' whispered Mrs. Wallace.

'If you want a name for it, my dear madam,' was the reply, 'I could give you half a dozen very fine ones; but, the fact is, one cannot tell what is the matter yet. We shall know better in a few hours. Whatever it may be that threatens him, he is very delicate, and will want careful and intelligent nursing'—and he looked doubtfully at the ayah.

'I am an excellent nurse,' said Mrs. Wallace; 'or, at all events,' she added, with characteristic modesty, 'I ought to be, if experience is of any value.'

'It is of inestimable value,' said the Doctor; 'but have you no one to ask leave of in the matter?'

'Not in a case like this,' she answered confidently. 'My husband, I know, will have but one answer to such a request.'

"Ella, Ella! don't leave me, Ella!" moaned the sick child, in a half dream.

'She is here, my darling,' said Ella, softly, and was leaning down to kiss him, when the Doctor interposed.

'Do not do that, Miss Josceline. There is no knowing what mischief may be in store for the little lad; though, on the other hand,' he added, with sudden cheerfulness, 'after a few hours' refreshing sleep he may wake up quite himself again.'

This last sentence was put in very dexterously. He had heard a hurried footstep behind, and guessed rightly to whom it belonged, namely to Mr. Aird himself.

The ex-Commissioner's face was a picture of woe and terror, and, as he stood at the foot of the little bed, he looked five years older than he had looked a few hours before.

'Do not wake him, Mr. Aird,' said the Doctor; 'the less excitement he has the better; while sleep is, on the other hand, the best of medicines.'

'But you were speaking of mischief,' returned the other, in an anxious whisper. 'What is that you fear for my—my darling!'

'Well; he has, in my judgment—they may pass off, you know, but still he has them—some premonitory symptoms of fever.'

'What! Scarlet fever?'

'Hush! pray control yourself, Mr. Aird, or you will do harm where you would most repent it. I don't know what fever at present; but, as it may be of a contagious kind, I had just forbidden this young lady to kiss the child.'

Mr. Aird turned his eyes to Ella, and apparently became conscious of her presence for the first time; his face wore a look of confusion so much more than of recognition even then, that the Doctor proceeded to explain matters.

'These two ladies,' he said, smiling, 'I found, like a couple of angels, guarding this little fellow's pillow. Mrs. Wallace here, having, she tells me, had experience in illness, has kindly volunteered to nurse him. He will want nursing, and I cannot say I have any very responsible person to recommend in the village.'

'God bless you!' said Mr. Aird, fervently, his eyes glancing gratefully at Mrs. Wallace, and then reverting to his child's face.

'There must be another sick nurse also,' continued the Doctor, 'whom I can provide; though I could hardly have put her in sole charge. It is a pity she is not younger, because with young people—'

'Ella! don't leave me, Ella!' repeated Davey, in the same half unconscious, half pleading tones.

'I am not going to leave you, darling,' she replied; then turning to the Doctor, she added, 'You see the child has a fancy for my presence, Dr. Cooper, which in his state I am sure should not be crossed. It is true that I am unaccustomed to nursing—or, indeed, to do anything useful—but I am most willing, and you must let me try my best.'

'It would never do,' Miss Josceline, answered the Doctor



'it would place too great a responsibility upon my shoulders. Mrs. Wallace, having her husband's consent in the matter, is her own mistress; but you don't know what you are asking. At this very moment I have my doubts whether I ought not to order you from the room.'

'Do you think I am afraid of the fever?' inquired Ella, scornfully.

'I am sure you are not,' said the Doctor, patting her on the shoulder. 'You look to me as if you would be afraid of nothing except doing wrong.'

'And that I should be doing if I left this child after he has asked me to stay and nurse him,' said Ella, earnestly. 'See how his little hand clasps mine!'

The Doctor could see it; but Mr. Aird could not, because his eyes were filled with tears.

'But, my dear young lady,' said the Doctor, 'you are not, I repeat, like Mrs. Wallace, here, the mistress of your own actions. Your father, whom I have the honour to know, must be consulted in the matter; and I honestly tell you that, in my opinion, he would be fully justified in saying "No." Mr. Aird himself will, I am sure, take the same view.' For the first time the old Indian removed his anxious eyes from the sleeping boy, and fixed them elsewhere—on Ella.

'Miss Josceline,' he said, 'I feel your kind offer as I do that of Mrs. Wallace; my heart is too full to express how much. In her case I accept it; in yours, I dare not. If anything should happen to you through—through Davey—— She has no business to be here, Doctor, as it is, has she?'

'She has not,' replied the Doctor, decisively.

'Hush!' said Ella, 'would you have me wake the child? Do you not see he has his hand in mine?'

Nothing more was said just then on that point. Dr. Cooper objected to the room as being too small in case of sickness, and recommended the little patient's removal into another apartment; and, having left divers other directions behind him, presently went home to make up his prescription.

In the meantime the news that Davey Aird had been taken ill with a fever that might possibly prove infectious, spread, with the swiftness of contagion itself, over the whole house. Mrs. Trant, the landlady, though secretly almost beside herself with apprehension, maintained her usual philosophic demeanour, and made arrangements for preparing the Prior's room, as it was called, for the patient's reception; it formed one of two or three apartments, entitled the 'Hostel,' cut off by a long passage from the rest of the house, and practically isolated from it. Even if it should please God to visit the child and her own establishment with such a calamity as scarlet fever—which was far from being likely, for the place was health itself—all danger, she averred, would be confined to that locality.

This view of the case, however, it was difficult for Mrs. Trant to persuade her guests at the *Ultramarine* to share. Mrs. Amytage—who, however, was no coward, and did not dream of flight—expressed her opinion that scarlet fever the malady would turn out to be, nor was it to be wondered at that a child who was allowed to sit down to a late dinner with grown-up people every night should sooner or later have contracted some such malady.

On the other hand, Mrs. Jennynge immediately began to pack up; the idea of infection suggested death, which even the prospect it afforded of her being reunited to her beloved Nathaniel failed to rob of its terrors. Her daughter said nothing either for or against departure; the peril did not much alarm her; and if the report was true that Miss Josceline, for some inscrutable reason of her own, had volunteered to be the child's sick nurse, she hoped in her absence to regain that supremacy as 'leading young lady' in the hotel drama of which Ella's arrival had undoubtedly robbed her. Moreover, she knew that the case was one in which opposition could have been of no avail. In some things—mostly small ones—her mother was submissive to her; in others she was not to be guided; and having the absolute charge of the purse strings, was far less to be coerced.

The suspected bride was not inclined without good reason to leave her present quarters. It was not often that she had the opportunity of dining every day with an Honourable; and Mr. Josceline, who had a very pleasant way with all ladies, and especially with young and pretty ones, was really a favourite of hers. If small-pox had been in the air she would have fled within the hour; but scarlet fever, at the worst, did not disfigure one.

As for the gentlemen, the Professor had been for weeks in search of a butterfly with green wings, reported by the 'Entomologist' to be in the neighbourhood of Wallington, the pursuit of which had already entailed on him several severe colds, an acute attack of rheumatism, and a sprained ankle, and whose capture would have more than repaid him for fifty fevers. Mr. Percival-Lott was not a man to trouble himself about diseases of any kind; and, provided that no epidemic was so virulent as to deprive the billiard table of its usual complement of pool players, it was free, so far as he was concerned, to run its course, and welcome. Mr. Wallace had a cheerful confidence that Emma (his wife) knew what she was about, and might be safely left to the guidance of her own judgment; if she thought it right to nurse the little lad, it was sure to be right. And as for infectious disorders—with the exception of the foot-and-mouth disease, with which it appeared nobody was threatened—they were the Doctor's business, and not his.

Mr. Josceline—who, thanks to the dignity of his position, was the last to be informed of the impending calamity—had it broken to him in a very unexpected manner. Ella's prolonged delay above stairs had not disturbed him; indeed, he was rather pleased

at it than otherwise, for he flattered himself she was giving her attention in her own apartment to the subject he had so delicately dropped into her mind. He was solacing himself for her absence with smoking cigarettes and perusing his favourite author, when there was a knock at the door—much louder than that modest tap which Phoebe the neat-handed was wont to administer—and in walked Dr. Cooper. Mr. Josceline honestly liked the man, and also, situated as he was, felt the advantage of making friends with him in many ways.

‘I am delighted to see you, Doctor,’ he said, ‘and the more so because I don’t want you—I mean professionally. This is really kind.’

‘I am sorry to say, however, Mr. Josceline,’ returned the other smiling gravely, ‘that my visit has a professional character. The fact is—though the danger may pass away—the *Ultramarine* is threatened with something very serious—a case of fever.’

‘Drains, of course,’ replied Mr. Josceline. ‘All these old houses are deficient in their sanitary arrangements.’

‘I don’t know the cause at present, though I don’t think it is anything local; little Davey Aird is down with some sort of fever.’

‘I am truly sorry to hear it, both for his own and father’s sake.’ And for the moment Mr. Josceline was really sorry. He had, it is true, speculated vaguely in his own mind upon delicate little Davey’s being removed from this world of sorrow; but many of us do the like without actually wishing the object of our calculations any harm.

‘Yes; Mr. Aird is, of course, dreadfully distressed and anxious. My errand here, however, concerns you more nearly. When the child was taken ill it seems your daughter was called to his assistance; and she is even now by his bedside.’

‘Good gracious! But is not that dangerous?’

‘Well; let us hope not. I will not conceal from you, however, that she has incurred—*has* incurred, mark me—a certain risk, although a small one.’

‘But why, in Heaven’s name, does she not come away?’

‘Well; the fact is, she is stopping there—in Heaven’s name; that is, out of her natural goodness and kindness of heart. The child is evidently attached to her, and she is loth to leave him. Mr. Aird, of course, is deeply grateful, but is sufficiently unselfish to regard the matter from what, I presume, will be your own point of view. She has volunteered with that excellent Mrs. Wallace—who, between ourselves, is worth all the other women here put together, though they think her such small beer—to nurse the child. That is, of course, with your permission. If the case should turn out to be a serious one, there will be undoubtedly risk. But in that event, as I have said, some risk has been already incurred by her having been in such close proximity with the little patient.

‘Has Mr. Aird sent you to ask my leave?’

‘Nay, I cannot say that; it would have been highly improper of him, in my opinion, to make such a request; your consent, of course, would lay him under an eternal obligation; but I have come, as was my duty, to learn for myself your view of the matter. It is for you, and you only to decide. The actual peril, though very appreciable, is, after all, remote; but it will very likely become necessary to isolate the case, and thereby deprive you for some time of Miss Josceline’s society. Mr. Aird’s last words to me were, “It is too much to ask of anybody;” and it is certainly a great deal to ask.’

Mr. Josceline turned away from his companion—an act of discourtesy which, unless in anger, he had never committed in his life—and gazed thoughtfully out of the open window, as though seeking the reply that was expected of him from sky and sea.

‘In case I accede to this,’ he answered, presently, ‘is my daughter to be removed from me now, from this moment? Am I not to see her?’

‘Of course, Mr. Josceline, I cannot prevent your seeing her, but I think it would be highly injudicious. At present we know the extent of probable infection, if infection there should be. It is limited to four persons; for doctors, you know, are like Old Bailey attorneys, who notwithstanding the immorality of their clients, always remain pure and good, neither catching anything themselves nor communicating it to others.’

That Mr. Josceline had no smile for this, showed how deeply he was moved by the thoughts within him.

‘I owe it to Mrs. Trant and to her lodgers,’ continued the visitor, ‘that the danger should be minimised as much as possible. I would prefer you not to see Miss Josceline—since to do so would give me another cause for anxiety—unless you have resolved to forbid her to carry out her present intention. If, on the other hand, you are prepared to permit it——’

‘I *am* prepared,’ interrupted Mr. Josceline, suddenly. ‘I have quite made up my mind. I think it would be wrong of me to step between my daughter and an act of Christian charity. Tell her, with my dear love, that she has my full permission to nurse the child.’

The other gazed at him with an admiration that was not, however, unmixed with some surprise.

‘Such a determination does you honour, Mr. Josceline; it is one that few fathers—with a daughter so dear to them, as I know Miss Josceline is to you—could have brought themselves to entertain. She will, I am sure, be most grateful for your consent; and as for Mr. Aird——’

Mr. Josceline waved his hand as though that consideration was of small consequence indeed, as compared with other matters, and also to indicate that he wished to be alone—as, indeed, he did.

‘I will leave you, sir,’ continued the Doctor, gravely, ‘to your own thoughts, which should be happy ones if the reflection of having performed a noble and unselfish action can give happiness.’ And with a cordial grasp of his large hand he left Mr. Josceline to his meditations.

These were not altogether of the kind that his visitor had anticipated; though, on the whole, as he had hinted, they conferred considerable satisfaction.

‘I am right, I am surely right,’ murmured Mr. Josceline to himself; ‘such an opportunity as this should not be let slip. My time is short; the risk is small; the prize is great.’

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE INVITATION.

THE company at the *table-d’hôte* that day were much diminished in numbers. Some intending lodgers who had arrived at the hotel, on hearing that there was risk of fever, had instantly taken their departure, so that there were no new recruits; while the absence of Ella and of Mr. Aird and of his son from one side of the table, and of Mrs. Wallace from the other, made very melancholy gaps. Felspar and Vernon, in consequence of the latter’s ailment, also failed to present themselves, so the guest-roll at the *Ultramarine* was limited to eight persons. This, however, had the effect of making them more like a family party than ever, while the subject of conversation, being of course little Davey’s illness, drew them in some respects still nearer together by reason of its unusual seriousness. The degrees of acquaintanceship vary less in proportion to the frequency of meeting than of our common interest in the matters discussed. This circumstance, it is true, did not mitigate the hostile feeling between Mrs. Armytage and Mrs. Jennynge; they were Irreconcilables, and would have quarrelled on the same raft after a shipwreck; but it made the relations with each of these ladies and the rest of the party decidedly more close and familiar. All, too, were agreed that the conduct of the grand-daughter of the Earl of Boroughby in exposing herself to the dangers of infection for the sake of little Davey was above all praise. Miss Jennynge was especially loud in her commendations, which were also so far genuine that she thought Ella could not have done better than have thus cut herself off from society, and left her (Anastasia) in possession of the field.

‘I only hope,’ said Mrs. Armytage, ‘that Miss Josceline will find herself repaid; but I am afraid our Indian friend is not very gracious, while the poor child—though, indeed, it is not his fault—is sadly spoilt, and likely to turn out a very troublesome patient.’



‘I hope,’ said Mr. Josceline, smiling gravely, ‘that my daughter has no expectation of any reward save that which is derived from the consciousness of having done her duty.’

‘I am sure she has not,’ said Mrs. Jennynge, eagerly.

‘Goodness gracious! what other expectation could she have?’ observed Mrs. Armytage, sharply. ‘The impudence of the woman,’ as she afterwards expressed it, in thus volunteering a corroboration of Mr. Josceline’s sentiments, ‘really surpassed everything.’

‘And in acknowledging Miss Josceline’s goodness,’ continued Mrs. Jennynge, bent on recommending herself to the attention of the brother of the Earl of Boroughby, ‘we must not forget the self-sacrifice which her father has shown in the matter. He has not only exposed his daughter to a frightful risk, but voluntarily deprived himself of her society.’

‘In that respect Mr. Wallace has sacrificed himself as much as I have,’ said Mr. Josceline, modestly.

‘Whatever my wife thinks it right to do is right,’ observed the farmer, simply, ‘and ought to satisfy me.’

‘Very proper,’ a very sensible observation,’ ‘just so,’ murmured the company. They had no objection to Mr. Wallace entertaining such noble sentiments, or any others; but the idea of his supposing his case to be a parallel one with that of the Hon. George Emilius Josceline struck them as absurd to the last degree. Earls’ grand-daughters are rare, while the supply of farmers’ wives (should anything happen to one of them) is practically unlimited.

‘I have just heard from Dr. Cooper,’ continued Mr. Wallace, ‘that both Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon offered their services to him to help nurse the little fellow.’

‘Deuced kind of them,’ muttered Mr. Percival-Lott, twirling his moustaches. ‘Let us hope they were not moved to play the part of Good Samaritans by the fact that Miss Josceline had undertaken that of Miss Nightingale.’

‘For shame, Percy!’ exclaimed the suspected bride; ‘Mr. Josceline will hear you.’

As a matter of fact that gentleman *had* heard him, and, though not a muscle of his countenance betrayed the fact, had done so with considerable interest. Had Mr. Percival-Lott winged his random shaft aright, he wondered? If so, he had not taken his own precautions in vain as respected Mr. Vernon; and it might be necessary to take others. His hope was, however, that by the time Ella had finished her engagement as nurse she might have entered into another—of another kind—which would render any further attentions on the part of the young contributor to the ‘Mayfair Keepsake’ superfluous.

‘I think if Mr. Felspar offered his services to nurse little Davey,’ observed Mrs. Jennynge, indignantly, ‘it was very improper of him.’

‘One would think you were his mother,’ ejaculated Mrs. Armytage. ‘He is old enough to do as he pleases, I suppose.’

'I said nothing about age, Mrs. Armytage,' answered Mrs. Jennynge, trembling with indignation. 'It is true I am not—as you are so polite as to suggest—his mother; but I am his employer. He has undertaken to do a certain work for me which it would be quite impossible for him to accomplish if he became a sick nurse.'

'But we thought all that was over,' returned Mrs. Armytage, bluntly.

'All what was over?' exclaimed her rival, shaking like an autumn leaf, and, like it, exceedingly red.

'Why, everything. We heard that you were going away, bag and baggage; frightened out of your wits at the idea of catching the scarlatina.'

Poor Mrs. Jennynge looked as if she had caught it already; yet she felt a sense of relief, too, for when Mrs. Armytage had said 'we thought all that was over,' she had had a dreadful apprehension that she was referring to something more serious than her mere departure, and the idea of which she had secretly begun to entertain in her mind.

'We hear a great many things that are not true,' she observed, with dignity; 'but people of good sense do not repeat them.'

'Hoity, toity!' exclaimed Mrs. Armytage, laughing; 'what a fuss about nothing! Are you going to run away from us, or are you not?'

'I have really not quite made up my mind,' answered Mrs. Jennynge.

Upon the whole she preferred Mrs. Armytage's manner when it was downright rude, as in the present case, to when it was merely aggravating; and, moreover, there was a certain reason which caused her to feel satisfaction at having had the fact thus publicly extracted from her, that she was still in doubt as to leaving the hotel. On Mr. Josceline this news had a contrary effect; he had not heard that Mrs. Jennynge had any intention of quitting the *Ultramarine*, and the bare possibility of it discomposed him exceedingly. He contrived, as the ladies left the room, to have a few words with the last of them, who, in the order of exit, was naturally Miss Jennynge.

'I hope this is not true,' he said, with marked concern, 'about your mother's thinking of taking you away from us?'

'I am sure I don't know, Mr. Josceline,' she answered, with a little pout; 'you heard what she said just now. She is still, it seems, in a state of indecision.'

'But you don't wish to go, yourself, I'm sure—or, at least, I hope.' And Mr. Josceline looked down and sighed, as if he had been five-and-twenty, and had said too much.

'Well, of course I don't; but in matters of this kind I have no influence with my mother whatever, I do assure you. Now I think a word from *you*.'

'From *me*!' Mr. Josceline looked more surprised than he

could express. 'Oh, dear, if you think *that*, I will certainly speak. I confess, my dear Miss Jennynge, I am quite unscrupulous, and actuated solely by selfish motives.'

'*You* selfish? When you have deprived yourself of your daughter's society to benefit others?'

'Yes; but then I thought I should have had it in some measure made up to me; I flattered myself that you and your mother, for instance, would have made a great deal of me now that I was left alone; that I should be honoured with more of your society; and as for your running away from the hotel and leaving me to the tender mercies of Mrs. Armytage, such an idea never entered into my head. 'It is what the newspapers call "A Case of Heartless Desertion."'

'Well; I'll tell mamma what you say,' said Anastasia.

'Do,' said Mr. Josceline, boldly; 'and I hope,' added he, in lower tones, 'that I shall not want a kind word from yourself; the kindest you can utter will be "Stay," remember.'

'I'll ask mamma,' said Anastasia, blushing—the phrase she was employing, perhaps, suggested to her the occasion on which it is generally used; and really Mr. Josceline's tone and manner were at once so tender and polite that he seemed to be offering his hand and heart to her upon a silver salver.

Of the manner of his address, however, she said nothing in speaking to her mother, but only conveyed to her the substance of it.

'Mr. Josceline,' she said, 'seems very much amazed at our going away, and says he quite depended on seeing more of us now that he has deprived himself of his daughter's society.'

'Dear me, you don't say so!' replied Mrs. Jennynge, unable to conceal her delight. 'I must say that is very complimentary to us, Statty.'

'He is a gentleman of good birth,' answered the young lady, 'and of course appreciates natural refinement. He sees we are very different—indeed, he said as much—from Mrs. Armytage and Mrs. Lott, and the rest of them. That is only natural. Still, I must confess it is satisfactory.'

Mrs. Jennynge cautiously abstained from saying how very satisfactory she herself felt it to be.

'No doubt, no doubt' my dear,' she answered; 'and since he is alone, and seems as it were to expect it, I think it would be only civil to ask him to take coffee with us this evening here, in our own apartment.'

Anastasia looked about her a little doubtfully. One may have the most dutiful and domestic instincts, and yet exercise an independent judgment upon the personal appearance of a parent in a picture or plaster of Paris; and it struck Miss Jennynge that the collection of portraits of her papa, and especially that cast of him behind the screen, was somehow not calculated to impress the Hon. George Emilius Josceline favourably. If her mother began

talking to him about them in the usual way, she felt that he would be very far from appreciating it.

‘I think it would be only kind to ask Mr. Josceline, mamma,’ she answered; ‘only, being still a comparative stranger to us, I think it would be injudicious to show him—as you showed his daughter—all these memorials of dear papa; it would look as if we were anxious to place ourselves on a footing of familiarity—as, indeed, we are, you may say, but then I don’t know whether such a course of conduct would not in his case have just the contrary effect.

Anastasia’s arguments were slightly confused; and, indeed, she felt some delicacy, as well as difficulty, in expressing them; but, to her great relief, her mother appeared to appreciate the force of them.

‘You are right, Anastasia,’ she said; ‘I will not take Mr. Josceline into that sacred spot’—by which phrase she indicated the folding screen which concealed the *post-mortem* presentment of her husband’s features. ‘His sweet daughter appreciated the tender privilege I accorded to her, and sympathised with me to the uttermost; but men are so different.’

‘Very true, mamma,’ said Anastasia, with that sense of relief which we all experience when those who, by the inscrutable arrangements of Fate, have the whip hand of us, show themselves more amenable to reason than we had expected of them. ‘I suppose we had better write Mr. Josceline a little note?’ She said ‘we’ because she was generally her mother’s amanuensis on such occasions; for spelling, though we are told it comes by nature, does not come all at once; but, like gentlemanliness, commonly takes more than one generation for its perfection. To Mrs. Jennynge the longer words of our language were like fences, which her pen could not take at a run, but had to compass with caution and with the help of a dictionary.

It was somewhat to the younger lady’s surprise, therefore, that her mother replied, ‘I will write the note to Mr. Josceline myself, Anastasia, and, in the meantime, just take down a volume or two from the book-case and arrange them on the table—the “Book of Birth and Beauty,” and “Whither we are Going”—it will make the room look more like home to him.’

While this judicious selection of literature was being made for Mr. Josceline’s entertainment, that gentleman was sitting in his own apartment with a letter from Ella in his hand, which had just been brought in to him by the neat-handed Phoebe.

‘I’m feared it smells of smoke, sir,’ she said; ‘but Mrs. Trant she took it from the young lady with the tongs, and held it ever so long over the still-room fire.’

‘To disinfect it, I suppose? quite right, Phoebe,’ said Mr. Josceline, gravely, ‘but in future, if your mistress would smoke a cigarette over it as I am doing, it would be a safer plan—I mean as regards the letter.’

‘I’ll tell her, sir,’ returned Phœbe, stolidly. ‘And, please, sir, I was to say as Miss Josceline was looking quite well, and didn’t expect to catch nothing.’

‘I hope she will, nevertheless,’ was Mr. Josceline’s reflection, as he opened the dispatch.

‘My dear papa, how ever can I thank you enough,’ it began, ‘for sparing me to nurse Davey? If you could see his pleasure—though I am sure I don’t know why the child should have taken such a fancy to me—it would well repay you for the loss of my poor society; while, as for Mr. Aird, his gratitude is such that I feel almost afraid of his going down on his knees.’

Here a smile of content stole over the reader’s face, and he dropped the letter on his lap, and reclining in his arm-chair gazed on the curling smoke of his cigarette, as was usual with him in moments of reflection.

‘Mrs. Wallace is worth her weight in gold, and it is all I can do to secure my fair share of what little work is required of us. She and I occupy what is called the Prior’s parlour, which opens into the dormitory, an airy room where little Davey is located with the ayah. Our plan is to take a night-watch alternately; for Abra, though an excellent creature, has “an exposition of sleep” upon her, she tells us, which lasts for eight or nine hours on a stretch, and is not easily broken into. On the other side of the room there is the refectory, where we are to take our meals; and beyond that is Mr. Aird’s room, which, at present, however, he has shown no intention to inhabit. It is impossible to get him away from Davey’s pillow, though Mrs. Wallace promises it shall be done in due time: it is curious what a force of will has suddenly developed in her—quite as strong as is exhibited by another lady of our acquaintance—but only exercised as it seems, in her case, in behalf of others. You may be quite sure, dear papa, that with good Mrs. Wallace I am in safe hands. Nothing troubles me but the thought that you may miss me a little bit, though I know how proud and pleased everybody will be to make much of you; Mrs. Wallace tells me you are such a favourite with all the ladies here that I feel quite jealous. Dr. Cooper has called again, but can say nothing decisive yet; to see poor Mr. Aird hanging upon his words and looks, is quite pitiful. I shall write you a bulletin daily—let us hope there will be but few of them—and I need not say that the greatest blessing to me in quarantine will be a letter from your dear self.

‘Your loving daughter

‘ELLA JOSCELINE.’

‘That is a good girl,’ muttered Mr. Josceline; ‘not one in a thousand is like her; no, nor one in ten thousand. To come of such a stock, too! Bah! what rubbish people talk of birth and blood! Not that I ought to blame them—the idiots. What, *another* bulletin, Phœbe?’

‘No, sir; leastways, I don’t know, sir,’ returned the waitress,



simply, 'unless you mean a billy-doo; it's from Mrs. Jennynge. I was to say you were not to trouble to write, but just to say "Yes," or "No."'

'Very good; my compliments, then, and say, I shall have great pleasure.'

It was not often, although so prodigal of smiles in company, that, when he was alone, Mr. Josceline indulged himself in them; but on this occasion he leant back in his chair with Mrs. Jennynge's open note in his hand, and fairly shook with inward merriment.

'Dear Mr. Josceline,—The absence of your charming daughter must be my excuse for asking you to do us the honour of taking coffee with us this evening. Since you are absolutely alone, you may find our society a relief; at least, I myself have sometimes discovered that anything is preferable to solitude and the recollections of the past. I am especially hopeful to see you this evening, since it may be the last—though we have not *quite* made up our minds upon that subject—that we may spend at Wallington Bay. I shall leave it with much regret; but, on the other hand, I hardly like to expose my dear and only Anastasia to the risk of contagion. You have permitted your sweet daughter, it is true, to expose herself to it, but at her own request, and in the sacred cause of duty. Anastasia's case is different, and I scarce know what to do; there was a time when I had no need to seek for advice, but had it voluntarily proffered by the best of husbands. There is none, alas! to help me in my doubts and troubles now. However, I have no right to intrude such sorrows upon the ear of—I had almost written a stranger, but I must permit myself to substitute—of so recently acquired a friend as yourself. I forget, I am ashamed to say, whether you take cream or hot milk with your coffee, so have ordered both.

'Yours faithfully,

'JANE JENNYNGE.'

'By Jingo, Phoebe was right, and it is a *billet doux*,' murmured Mr. Josceline, softly. 'Things are taking a most convenient turn, and in the very nick of time. Pah! How her note smells of india-rubber! And what a lot of erasures there are in it! The pen-knife must have been instigated, I should imagine, by the dictionary. The whole appearance of the thing reminds me of the "holiday-letter" one wrote at school under the master's eyes; but the composition is *sui generis*, and certainly intended for no eye but mine. What an old fool she is! Never mind,' he sighed—and his gaze fell on the note he had received from Ella—'it is for *your* sake, my darling; and I do not grudge the sacrifice.'

And with a glance in the mirror over the mantelpiece, and another at his 'filbert' nails, he repaired to the widow's sitting room.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE WIDOW'S RING.

THOUGH young people of both sexes think a good deal about love, they absolutely decline to consider its existence possible between persons of mature age. They admit that the contemporaries of their grandfathers and grandmothers may entertain a tender passion for *them*, and they have even been known to reciprocate it; but they flout the idea of those ancient people having a tenderness for one another. Hence I sometimes flatter myself, when I am inclined to flirt with some young person a third of my age, and undoubtedly three times as good-looking, that I am driven to that course of conduct from fear of ridicule. One must flirt with somebody; and though it would be more becoming to select a contemporary, I dare not do it, from dread of what the young folks will say, but pay my attentions to the prettiest girl I can find as a *pis aller*.

Miss Jennynge had no more idea that Mr. Josceline aspired to her mother's hand, when he accepted her invitation that evening, than that he had a design of possessing himself of the cast of her father's head, or of the collection of his photographs; though she herself would not have objected to becoming his wife for a few years, and the Hon. Mrs. George Emilius Josceline for ever. And that astute gentleman had possessed himself of this tender secret, which she believed to be hidden in her virgin bosom from every eye.

This knowledge, while it imposed upon him considerable difficulties, gave him a great advantage. He knew that any attention he paid to Anastasia would be set down by Mrs. Jennynge to his desire to avert her daughter's suspicions, while her daughter herself would take them *au sérieux*. The killing of two birds with one stone was a metaphor altogether too feeble for this masterly course of conduct. If Mr. Vernon had known of the position—which would have been excellent 'copy' for him—he would have likened it to getting the self-same article accepted (and paid for) by 'Punch' and the 'Pulpit.'

'We're so glad you're come!' exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge, as she gave him her well-jewelled hand; 'it is so thoughtful and kind of you.'

Thoughtful it might have been, though hardly in the sense in which Mrs. Jennynge intended it. The fact was, the excellent old lady was rather off her head with excitement, and used the first gracious terms that came into it; but the kindness was surely the other way, as Mr. Josceline hastened to say.

'It is very kind of you and your daughter,' he answered, 'to take pity upon my loneliness.'

'We are lonely ourselves,' said Anastasia, 'for now that Miss Josceline has gone there is no attraction for us in the ladies' drawing-room. Mrs. Armytage is more intolerable than ever. You noticed, no doubt, how insolent she was at dinner; well, she she has been in tears half the afternoon. Can you possibly guess why, Mr. Josceline?'

'Well, I should hope it was because she heard the rumour of your possible departure.'

'Not she,' said Mrs. Jennynge, at which somewhat blunt sally Mr. Josceline smiled as though it had been the subtlest of epigrams.

'Mrs. Armytage has found in a book from the circulating library,' continued Anastasia, 'a passage which has affected her most distressingly.'

'Dear me; from one of the poets, no doubt,' said Mr. Josceline; 'a delicate nature like hers must be easily unstrung by poetic suggestion.'

'What a wicked man you are!' smiled Mrs. Jennynge admiringly. 'A little bird told me you could be very severe when you pleased, though I refused to believe it.'

It was evident from the colour that came into Anastasia's face that she was the bird in question, but she pursued her narrative without taking any notice of this little digression.

'No, it was not a poetry book' ('Poetry book!' thought Mr. Josceline; 'she's worse than the other!'); 'it was a paragraph from some work on natural history about the duration of life in animals. "The rhinoceros," she told us, "exists for ever so long, the alligator, except from over-eating itself, scarcely knows what it is to die, but the dog—the faithful dog—attains but rarely to twenty years of life." According to that computation, her "own sweet Fido," as she calls him, has, it seems, only about fifteen years of existence before him, which has put her in a most dreadful state.

'No, wonder,' said Mr. Josceline; 'fifteen years—why, it's a mere span.' His tone was more cynical even than he intended, for he was thinking of 'the probabilities' of the duration of his own existence.

'I had it on the tip of my tongue,' continued Anastasia, 'to ask the woman how long she expected to live herself.'

'That would have been very rude, Statty,' said Mrs. Jennynge reprovingly. 'Don't you think so, Mr. Josceline?'

'Well, it would have been slightly personal, no doubt; but the temptation to one who possesses humour must, we must allow, have been considerable. Of the society, however, to be found in the ladies' drawing-room your daughter appears to be quite independent, if I may judge from these charming flowers. They are nature itself. I was afraid that it was an occupation that had

died out with our young ladies—a lost art, like the green tint in painted windows and the exquisite old lace of——’

‘They are *mine*!’ interrupted Mrs. Jennynge with modest triumph.

Considering that Mr. Josceline had heard all about this particular manufactory of wax flowers from Ella, the extremity of astonishment manifested in his features was most creditable to him. He looked from Mrs. Jennynge to her violets, and from her violets to Mrs. Jennynge, as though he were doubting which of them was wax, and which the lovely and odorous offspring of nature.

‘It is miraculous!’ he murmured.

What in reality, however, struck him as much more extraordinary was the spectacle of Anastasia with her thumb in her mouth, which at this moment he beheld in the looking-glass. He was unaware, of course, that this was equivalent to the hoisting the drum in Admiral Fitzroy’s signal system; but he saw by the lowering of her brow that a storm was brewing, and felt he had pushed his compliments to her mother too far. The human mind is able to bear a very considerable weight of personal flattery, but it is often impatient of a pennyweight when the flattery is addressed to a third person.

‘I have often thought,’ said Mr. Josceline, musing, ‘that the combinations of which art is capable have never been sufficiently experimented upon. A picture was shown me the other day of the home garden of a noble friend of mine, with photographs of his family, reduced to the proper comparative size, sitting on the seats and in the arbours. The effect was a little stiff, but the idea seemed to me capable of development. Now why should not these exquisite flowers be made to form a foreground in some beautiful landscape, such as I see on yonder table?’

‘It would spoil them both,’ said Anastasia curtly.

‘Pardon me, my dear young lady,’ said Mr. Josceline, taking up the work of art in question and examining it with great minuteness, ‘we cannot tell till we have tried. This is a very delicate specimen of the master indeed, and there is no doubt of the master; it is a Birket Foster.’

‘Oh, dear no, that’s mine,’ said Anastasia briskly.

‘Yours? You astound me!’ ejaculated Mr. Josceline. ‘I took it for an original which you had set yourself to copy. Dear me! If my Ella could only paint like this I should never venture to criticise. She told me that you were a most marvellous performer—but really this——’

‘I think Anastasia has a natural gift for painting,’ observed Mrs. Jennynge.

‘Natural gift, my dear madam! It is genius. In your daughter’s presence I dare not say what I think of it, and I am thought to have some little taste in these matters too. I am not one to praise, I hope, without discrimination. Now this again —

he took up another specimen—‘has vigour and skill; the trained hand and eye are very perceptible; the execution perhaps is even better; but the conception, the exquisite suggestiveness of the other, is wanting in it.’

‘Why, lor bless me!’ exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge—‘that’s Mr. Felspar’s. He left it for my daughter to copy. Didn’t he, Statty?’

‘Yes, that is Mr. Felspar’s,’ said Anastasia, her countenance beaming with pride and delight, but also, as was usual with her when excited, growing very red in the wrong places.

‘Well, all I can say is,’ said Mr. Josceline with an air of conviction, ‘that in my opinion Mr. Felspar has very little to teach you, my dear Miss Jennynge. What admirable perspective! How softly the distances are made to mingle! This is an unexpected treat indeed.’

The observation of course referred to the picture, but just at that moment the coffee was brought in, which made the application of the remark a little vague.

‘Do you take cream or hot milk?’ observed Mrs. Jennynge anxiously. ‘It was very remiss in me, as I told you, not to have taken note of that.’

‘Indeed, my dear madam, it is very good of you even to profess an interest in my poor tastes and fancies. I take black coffee, thank you.’

‘Black coffee!’ exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge regretfully. ‘I am afraid they have got nothing blacker than this in the house.’

The visitor was here attacked by such a severe cough that it brought the water into his eyes.

‘Mr. Josceline means, mamma,’ said Anastasia, in that tone of reproach she always used when her mother made a social mistake, ‘that he takes his coffee without milk or cream.’

‘La, now, I’d just as soon take a black dose,’ observed her mother, making a wry face.

‘It is an acquired taste, no doubt,’ said Mr. Josceline gently. ‘We men are the slaves of habit.’

‘Ah, I know what that means,’ observed his hostess. My poor dear Nathaniel always used to use those words in apology for taking something he was fond of, but which disagreed with him, or which he was afraid I should find fault with, such as a glass of gin and water. If you want a cigarette, Mr. Josceline, pray take one. I don’t at all object to smoke.’

‘You are an enchantress, Mrs. Jennynge,’ exclaimed Mr. Josceline, ‘and can read the innermost thoughts of us poor mortals.’

‘I think I understand the men,’ answered his hostess modestly. ‘Get Mr. Josceline a light, Statty.’

‘But are you sure *you* don’t object to the smell of tobacco, Miss Anastasia?’ inquired the visitor with solicitude.

‘I like it,’ answered the young lady with enthusiasm. After that eulogium upon her water-colour drawings, she would have



professed to like the smell of boiling cabbage-water, if that should have been the Hon. George Emilius Josceline's favourite tippie.

From that moment the visitor was on velvet; for such is the gracious influence of tobacco upon the cultivated mind that it strengthens us to endure the society of the tedious, while at the same time it so admirably matures and elevates the intelligence that we say nothing we ought not to say unless we are quite convinced it would be gratifying to our audience. From that moment Mr. Josceline carried on his little game of three-handed battledore with comparative ease; he gave the shuttlecock to each, not indeed in turn, but after just such an interval as prevented her from growing impatient, while he contrived to convince the other that he was temporarily depriving her of it not willingly, but in order to allay the flame of jealousy, or to extinguish the spark of suspicion. There was one thing, however, which Mr. Josceline was very anxious to effect, but with all his art had hitherto failed to compass. He wished to get rid of Anastasia, and to find himself alone with Mrs. Jennynge. To turn a young lady out of her own drawing-room without assigning any reason for it except that she is *de trop*, is a very difficult operation, as many of us in our youth may have had cause to remember, and this difficulty is greatly increased if she is the rival in our affections with the remaining occupant of the apartment. It is humiliating to confess the failure of so great a diplomatist, but after a couple of hours of conversation Mr. Josceline had only succeeded in the very easy task of charming his hearers, and was as far off from the object with which he had sought their society as when he began.

'I am afraid I must be going,' he said, 'for though I could sit up all night in such society, I should suffer for it (as one suffers for all one's pleasures, alas!) to-morrow. Late hours for the present are forbidden to me.'

'How one hates doctors!' observed Anastasia with a gent's sigh.

'It would be a mitigation of their severe sentence,' continued the visitor, 'if I might take that landscape of yours away with me—not to keep, of course.'

'I am sure you are very welcome to it,' said Anastasia earnestly.

Here an outbreak of jealousy might not without reason have been expected from Mrs. Jennynge. On the contrary, that lady smiled her sweetest smile, and in her tenderest voice exclaimed: 'No, my dear Anastasia, I cannot permit you to give Mr. Josceline that picture when you have the lovely Como landscape to give him instead; it would give him a much better impression of your talents.'

'But the Como is upstairs, mamma,' pouted Anastasia, 'at the bottom of the trunk.'

‘Never mind. I am sure you will not grudge a little trouble for our friend Mr. Josceline; fetch it, darling.’

As to woman’s tact, I have always had my doubts about it, but in the way of duplicity towards one another they are peerless. By this admirable arrangement Mrs. Jennynge had secured her daughter’s absence for full five minutes. The door had scarcely closed behind her ere Mr. Josceline took advantage of his long-sought opportunity.

‘In Miss Anastasia’s presence,’ he said in his most dulcet tones, ‘I could hardly ask you the question, my dear Mrs. Jennynge, which has been trembling on my lips.’

Mrs. Jennynge murmured in an affrighted tone, ‘Dear me, what question?’ and put on the same expression, as nearly as she could recall it, which she had worn when her lost mate, or rather her penultimate, had demanded her virgin hand, more than a quarter of a century ago. And here it was that Mr. Josceline’s experience failed him. He did not understand—what was the actual fact—that the widow was awaiting an offer of marriage there and then. He expected a little more delay and coquetry; and, though he meant to make his approaches very rapidly, it had not entered his mind to carry the widow’s heart by a *coup de main*. One loses many things by over-refinement, though not often, as in this case, 5,000*l.* a year.

‘I was going to ask you,’ he went on with gentle tenderness, ‘whether the report of your departure from the *Ultramarine* had any foundation in fact. I heard it spoken of at the *table-d’hôte*, of course, but something within me bade me hope that there might be some mistake. The tidings seemed too sad—I had almost said too terrible—to be believed.’

‘What can it signify to anybody, dear Mr. Josceline,’ returned the widow, with tender melancholy, ‘whether a poor forlorn creature like myself goes away or stops?’

‘I don’t know as to *anybody*,’ replied Mr. Josceline; ‘I can only answer for myself. To me your departure would be a misfortune indeed.’

‘Do you really wish me to stay, then, a little longer? Really?’ and the widow modestly lowered her eyes, and gave her hand a well-practised turn which exposed a bouquet of diamonds.

‘I do. I implore it,’ whispered Mr. Josceline eagerly.

‘Then I remain,’ she answered. ‘Hush, here’s Anastasia,’ and she drew her fingers back from Mr. Josceline’s tender grasp with such celerity that she actually left one of her rings in his hand. Even the temporary acquisition of such an article under such peculiar circumstances would have been a source of embarrassment to some people; but Mr. Josceline merely slipped it into his waistcoat pocket with one hand, while he took the *Como* from Anastasia with the other.

‘This is indeed a masterpiece,’ he said, and then fell into an

art-ecstasy; a performance which to him was as easy as stroking a cat.

‘And am I really to keep it?’ he inquired, as he rose to take his departure.

‘By all means,’ said Anastatia delightedly; ‘let me put it up in paper for you.’

In the rustle which this proceeding occasioned, the widow contrived to whisper, ‘And you will keep *my* little gift too,’ in Mr. Josceline’s ear.

‘I have given a ring or two away in my time,’ reflected that gentleman when he found himself in his own apartment, ‘and in each case with a certain significance attaching to it. But I don’t remember any one having given *me* an “engaged ring” before; and it’s not leap year, neither. However, the lady’s booked, which is a great relief—my poor dear Ella.’

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### A CHANGE OF VIEWS.

ON the evening of the same day on which Mr. Josceline and his daughter had visited Clover Cottage, Mrs. Gammer brought her two lodgers the tidings of little Davey’s illness. The young men were greatly distressed by it, for the child was a favourite with them both; and Felspar at once went up to the hotel to volunteer his services as sick nurse, which Vernon would also have done but that the state of his wounded hand for the present rendered him useless for such a post. Felspar’s assistance was of course declined, since the two ladies were already installed as nurses; and, as Mrs. Armytage cynically observed, ‘It would hardly have done to turn the Prior’s House into an Agapemone.’ From inquiries made at the doctor’s, it seemed that nothing was known for certain as to the nature of the illness; but among the little world of Wallington Bay it was represented, of course, as most alarming. Though some well-meaning attempts have been made of late years to discourage ‘sensations,’ they have not been wholly successful; and I am inclined to think that there is something in human nature itself which welcomes the thing, and has always done so, though of old it may have gone under some other name. With those who live dull, uneventful lives, in particular, anything out of the common way is attractive, even if it be a misfortune, provided only, of course, that it has not happened to themselves.

In Felspar’s absence, Mrs. Gammer discoursed to his friend upon the topic with much satisfaction, and dwelt with unction upon the very gloomiest view of the case. ‘After all, Mr. Walter, we must all die, young or old; it don’t much matter, for it is only a question of a year or two.’

‘My dear Mrs. Gammer,’ said Vernon, ‘you speak like a philosophical work, but even philosophy may be overdone. It would make me very uncomfortable, for example, to think you yourself would only live a year or two, and little Davey is much younger than you.’

‘That’s true, Mr. Vernon; and though, thank Heaven, I never have an ache or a pain, I don’t feel so much of a permanency as I did.’

The term permanency in her mouth was characteristic; her calling coloured her whole existence; man, in her eyes, seemed not so much a tenant for life as a lodger, more or less liable to quit at a moment’s notice.

‘But these little people are soon up, as well as soon down,’ urged Vernon, cheerfully.

‘Ah, but, mind you, the poor child is delicate, and a very bad subject for a disease of any kind. Fever, they say, comes from drains, as is like enough; for my part I don’t hold with these new-fangled inventions—sanitaries and what not; and there have been no drains in Wallington to my knowledge, and, until this present one, no fevers either. Now in Lawton—for I ha’ been there scores o’ times and smelt it—they’ve got what they call a sewage system, and the consequence is mumps is never out of the place. What I was going to say is, that fevers and drains is very much alike; you never know, as any landlady will tell you, if once you begin them, when you come to the end of drains; and it’s the same with fevers; we can hardly expect that the mischief will stop with poor little Davey. There’s poor Miss Josceline—’

‘There’s nothing the matter with Miss Josceline, surely?’ interrupted Vernon, taking his pipe from his mouth (a sure sign with him of great perturbation of mind).

‘Not yet; but she’s volunteered to nurse the child, and is shut up with him and the nurse, and Mrs. Wallace, and Mr. Aird; they are all together, they tell me, in the Prior’s House, in a galantine; so I reckon they must be keeping pretty close.’

‘In quarantine, you mean, Mrs. Gammer. Well, of course, it’s right to cut them off from the rest of the people in the hotel; but, dear me, though it is just like her kind heart, how very rash of Miss Josceline to volunteer for such a duty.’

‘Well, I don’t know as to that, Mr. Vernon; it is just as rash of Mr. Felspar, and I must say a little selfish too, for if he was took with the fever, there’s a lodger gone from Clover Cottage. After all, it’s woman’s work, is nursing, and I should think Miss Josceline would be the very one for it.’

‘Why?’

‘Well, she’s gentle in her ways, and cheerful, and she won’t go trapesing and trailing along the floors, as Miss Jennynge do, with that precious train of hers; why, that young woman couldn’t stoop over a pillow, to give a drop of medicine to a body,

or what not, for fear of busting her stays. Then there's Mrs. Armytage—she'd be no sort of use in a sick-room, I reckon; to have a will of your own is one thing, but she's too masterful; she'd take her own way with the patient (if she took him in hand at all, which I doubt), in spite of what the doctor might say; but Miss Josceline, she's of another sort, tractable and gentle, and yet with plenty of sense. One can see that with half an eye.'

'Mrs. Gammer,' said Vernon, 'you were saying the other day you would like a set of the "Mayfair Keepsake" for your parlour bookshelf; how would you like it bound?'

'Lor, sir, I never said it serious, but only because you seemed to take to it so much yourself; and on wet days, when they've got no books, lodgers is so trying. "If Mr. Vernon likes it, being such a judge," says I, "it must be first-class reading; and then there are the pictures."'

'The "Keepsake" has some excellent things in it, no doubt,' returned Vernon. 'You shall have a copy of it next week, Mrs. Gammer, because—because you're a good woman.'

'You're very kind, I'm sure, to say so, Mr. Walter,' said the landlady, the usual peony tint of her complexion assuming the hue of beetroot. 'It's a comfort I'm sure, in this world, when one finds one's efforts to do one's duty appreciated, and more especially by one's lodger'

Vernon, however, did not hear her; he was wrapped in thought: the question of blue and gold, or green and gold, as a binding for the 'Keepsake' was perhaps agitating his mind; so his companion believed, at all events, and being a woman of much judgment in practical matters, she left him to his reflections.

Mr. Felspar had little to tell his friend with which we are unacquainted, and he found the task of breaking to him the fact of Ella's voluntary exposure to the danger of infection much easier than he had anticipated. Vernon remarked that to hear of such an act of self-sacrifice was only what he had expected, which, considering that he was already acquainted with the circumstances, was very true. The comparative coolness with which he received the news was so far satisfactory to his friend that it convinced him he had taken the right course in not communicating to Vernon what Mr. Josceline had told him respecting Ella's position and prospects. It would be time enough to do that should Vernon's intentions prove more serious. He could not, however, help contrasting the shock which the news of Miss Josceline's quixotic conduct had produced upon himself when Mrs. Trant had informed him of it, with the quiet manner in which Vernon had received it. It was the privilege of the young, who find women at their feet, he reflected bitterly, to be philosophic.

Yet all that night Vernon tossed sleeplessly in his bed, fevered, not with his wound, but with anxieties and forebodings founded



on those careless words dropped by Mrs. Gammer, 'One can hardly expect that the mischief will stop with little Davey.' He pictured Ella, like some idealised Miss Nightingale, devoting herself to the case of her little patient till contagion struck her down, and health, and perhaps life itself, were sacrificed on the altar of devotion. As for Mr. Josceline permitting his daughter to undertake such a task, he could find no sort of explanation of it; unless he was so inordinately selfish that nothing awoke his fears that did not imperil his own personal safety, the man must be mad. Even Mr. Felspar, though he had so much more data to draw conclusions from, did not guess Mr. Josceline's real motive in thus acting; indeed he did not imagine that he had any motive at all, but set down his conduct to sheer carelessness, and a dislike to contemplate serious possibilities.

Directly after breakfast the next morning, Mr. Felspar repaired to the hotel to make inquiries. He found things pretty much as they were. The little patient had passed an uneasy night; but no fresh symptoms had declared themselves. Of course none of the party in quarantine were visible, and, having obtained what information he could from Mrs. Trant, the painter was passing out on his road home when Mrs. Jennynge beckoned him in from her window. She was generally much at her ease with Felspar, whom, being poor, she naturally regarded as a person of no consequence, and also as being for the present, at least, in her employment; but on this occasion he noticed that she wore a look of some embarrassment, and that her tone was one of unwonted affability and conciliation. On repairing to her sitting-room he found Mrs. Jennynge alone, seated at her usual table by the window, where the manufactory of wax flowers was carried on, and in the act of designing a blush rose. If he had recollected that, as a rule, she devoted her artistic talents to flowers of the funereal sort only, this fact would have been significant; but as it was, it escaped his attention. He inquired after his pupil, Miss Anastasia, and was told she had gone out for a constitutional.

'The fact is,' added Mrs. Jennynge, with a nervous giggle, 'I was rather glad of it, since her absence gives me an opportunity of speaking to you a few words in private.'

'In private?' echoed Mr. Felspar, in an astonished tone.

The lady's colour was high, her voice timid if not tender, and her whole manner what the vulgar term flustered. Taking all this in connection with the manipulation of the blush rose, the painter was a little alarmed. He was not naturally more conceited than most of us—indeed he was less so; but it did strike him (with a shiver), for one passing instant, that Mrs. Jennynge had fallen in love with him, and was about to make him an offer of marriage.

'Yes, on business,' she continued, 'if that can be called such which has been a labour of love with you, as you have told us all your work is.'

‘Oh, I see, the portrait,’ interposed Felspar. It was impolite of him to interrupt her, but the sense of relief he experienced had been considerable, and the observation escaped him involuntarily.

‘Yes, the portrait of my late husband.’ (He noticed that she did not say as usual, when referring to that departed saint, ‘my lost Nathaniel.’) ‘It is unpleasant to have to say so, Mr. Felspar, but the likeness does not give me satisfaction.’

‘Indeed! Of course these things are a matter of opinion, Mrs. Jennynge,’ replied the painter quietly, ‘but certainly not a week ago you expressed your entire approval of it.’

‘Did I? Then I think that must have been merely to spare your feelings.’

Mr. Felspar smiled an amused smile, which spoke a volume: it seemed to say, ‘From what I know of your character, madam, that seems to me in the highest degree improbable.’

She knew what the smile meant well enough, for the flush of embarrassment gave way at once to the deeper flush of anger.

‘Well, at all events I don’t like it now,’ said she bluntly.

‘What’s the matter with it?’ inquired Mr. Felspar coolly, drawing back the curtain that concealed the picture standing on its easel. It struck him that some accident had happened to it, which might have induced a lady with a keen eye for her own advantage, such as he knew Mrs. Jennynge to be, to wish to cancel or amend her agreement. But there it stood as he had left it, not, perhaps, so idealised a presentment of her ‘lost Nathaniel’ as the widow might have desired, but undoubtedly a good likeness so far as it went, and it was almost finished.

‘It is neither this nor that which is the matter,’ said Mrs. Jennynge, regarding the portrait with marked disfavour; ‘it does not suggest to me the late Mr. Jennynge at all.’ Then, as if conscious that she had not expressed his relationship to her very pathetically, she added, in a tone broken by emotion, ‘I miss the smile; I miss the voice.’

‘The smile, madam,’ said Felspar coldly, ‘I can, if you please, make more pronounced, though it does not appear in the original; but as to the voice, that is certainly beyond me. A painter seldom succeeds in delineating the speech.’

The contemptuousness of his tone was extreme, and his companion felt it. It did not shame her, but it convinced her that she had started on the wrong tack; she had been wrong in supposing that the artist could be bullied.

‘My dear Mr. Felspar,’ she said, ‘do not let us dispute upon this matter, which after all, as you have said, is one of mere opinion. You are satisfied, it seems, but I am not. Our arrangement was, I think, that I was to pay you a hundred pounds—fifty pounds on the completion of the sketch, which sum you have already received, and fifty pounds on the completion of the oil painting.’

‘Which will be finished in three or four days at most,’ observed Mr. Felspar quietly.

‘I don’t know about that, I’m sure, but I don’t want it finished at all.’

‘Oh, I see. I have heard something of your intention to leave Wallington Bay, but instead of telling me of it in a straightforward manner, and asking to be off your bargain, you wish to find an excuse for dissatisfaction with my work.’

The speech was certainly far from conciliatory, but there was one thing in it which mitigated its severity to the person addressed. Mrs. Jennynge was relieved to find that Mr. Felspar attributed her change of views to her proposed departure from the hotel—an intention which, as we know, she had abandoned.

‘Well,’ said she naïvely, and without an attempt to resent his imputation, ‘it seems hard to pay for a thing we don’t want, doesn’t it?’

‘I might retort, madam,’ answered Felspar, his words falling slowly and coldly, like the droppings from an icicle, ‘that it seems also hard to have had to do work for nothing. But I am not in the habit of bargaining about my pictures. The law would award me the full amount agreed upon, since I am ready to fulfil my part of our contract; but I am content to waive my rights.’

‘And to charge me nothing?’ exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge, in a tone less of gratitude than of expectancy.

‘Nothing.’

‘Now I call that handsome,’ said Mrs. Jennynge admiringly; ‘very handsome. I have often heard of the generosity of Art, and so on, but I never believed it. Mr. Felspar, you are a gentleman.’

Mr. Felspar looked at her with an inquiring glance, as though he would have said, ‘How should *you* know?’ but the implied sarcasm flew over her head; she only felt that she had made an excellent bargain.

‘I am sure, my dear sir,’ she continued effusively, ‘we part the best of friends. Any further lessons, by-the-bye, you may be good enough to give my daughter must be no longer given *as* a friend. I must insist upon your being remunerated for them.’

‘But I thought you were going away?’ said Mr. Felspar.

‘To be sure, I forgot that,’ said Mrs. Jennynge, for the first time looking really abashed. ‘Our departure, however, is not quite certain.’

Mr. Felspar, to intimate that there were no doubts on that point in his own case, took up his hat. He was about to leave her, with a distant bow, when she stopped him.

‘I again repeat you have behaved most nobly, Mr. Felspar; but about the cheque?’

‘What cheque?’

‘Well, the fifty pounds. I mean, of course, the first fifty. You will send it back to me, I conclude, in the course of the day. We *may* be leaving the hotel, and at all events, as my poor husband used to say, “short settlements make long friends.”’

‘I wish your husband was alive, madam, and acting towards me as you have done. Then I could tell him what I thought of his behaviour. As you are a lady that is unfortunately impossible.’

‘Do you mean to say you are going to keep that first fifty, after all.’

‘Most decidedly I am. If I was as rich as you, and you were as poor as I, I should doubtless return it to you as a free gift, but, as it is, I should as soon think of making over to you my last year’s income. Good morning, madam.’

‘I don’t think much of artists,’ murmured Mrs. Jennynge when he had left the room. ‘However, I have got half the money back, which was more than was to be expected.’ Then she took the picture off the easel and placed it on the floor with its back to the wall. The model of her lost Nathaniel after death had been already stowed away out of sight, and now she collected his photographs and put them without much ceremony into the table-drawer. Having thus cleared the apartment of all the touching mementoes of the departed, she returned with a sigh of relief to the construction of the blush rose which she intended for the Hon. George Emilius Josceline.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### IN QUARANTINE.

THE sharp contrasts of which the world is full are sharpest, not between rich and poor, I think (though, Heaven knows, those are clearly defined enough), but between the hale and the sick. It is true that riches may be the lot of the healthy, and sickness that of the poor, in which case the question of compensation becomes (to the unphilosophic mind) importunate indeed; but there is no need for our present purpose to come face to face with that. There was difference enough between the mode of life pursued by the tenants of the *Ultramarine* in general, and that of that portion of them cut off from the rest by the double doors which divided it from the Prior’s House or Hostel. In the one case there was Mr. Josceline wooing and winning; Mrs. Jennynge, in an Indian summer of rapture; and Miss Anastasia, beginning to suspect what was going on, and something more than disgusted at somebody’s conduct—which, however, was a mystery to her. Mr. Josceline’s arrival with four horses had effected even more than he had given them credit for; they had put it beyond all question that he had the means suitable to his birth, and ‘What on earth he could see in her mamma?’ was the inquiry Miss Jennynge was for ever naturally putting to herself. She was not absolutely jealous of her mother, for though she would have had no objection to become the Hon. Mrs. Josceline herself, her affections were not



involved in the matter; but she said to herself privately that, 'there was no fool like an old fool, and that Mr. Josceline must be mad.' Otherwise, being a judicious young woman in most matters relating to her own interest, she made no fuss about it, and even pretended not to see what was going on. Mrs. Jennynge had told the simple truth when she said that her daughter was absolutely dependent on her; and therefore it behoved Anastasia to keep her suspicions to herself, though as time went on they became amply corroborated. The absence of her late papa's photograph from the parlour wall, and the disappearance of the cast of his countenance, had been significant enough; but now she noticed a certain ring upon Mr. Josceline's finger about which there could be no question, except how in the world her mother, being much afflicted with rheumatism in the joints, could ever have slipped it over her knuckles. Also, though secrets are said to lie under the rose, there was a blush rose in wax in Mr. Josceline's sitting-room, which, so far from concealing anything from Miss Anastasia, told her everything.

Mrs. Armytage, however, knew nothing of what was taking place; but since, for Mrs. Jennynge's sake, Mr. Josceline had once or twice taken up the cudgels against her, the Professor's wife had grown bitter against him, and even described his 'goings on' as disgraceful. Indeed, partly to conceal his profounder designs, but also because flirtation was natural to him, Mr. Josceline did, in his daughter's absence, make himself exceedingly agreeable, not only to Anastasia, who only pretended to like it, but to Mrs. Percival-Lott, who liked it very much.

In the Prior's Hostel, if there was no flirtation, there was a great deal of reciprocal affection of another kind. Mr. Aird, when not at his post by little Davey's pillow, could never sufficiently exhibit, though more by his manner than his words, his sense of the generous kindness of the two ladies who, at such inconvenience, and even peril, to themselves, had undertaken to nurse his beloved child; and the two women loved one another, and the little patient clung to both of them (though always most to Ella), and drew their hearts more and more closely to him every day. The fever had not abated, though, as Dr. Cooper remarked of it, it ought to have done so; the more dangerous symptoms had disappeared, but the child's rest was broken and uneasy, and he awoke from his slumbers unrefreshed. The immediate cause of this was nightmare. In the middle of the night he would wake up shrieking and pointing to the foot of his bed, where, as he said, stood a spectre. This ridiculous idea was, of course, combated by all about him, but without effect, and the incident had occurred twice. The ayah had always slept in his room. On the first night Ella had remained with him till nearly midnight, when she had been relieved at her post by Mrs. Wallace, and on the second the latter lady had remained till the attack, if such it could be called, took place. She protested with



much energy that she had never closed an eye, but Davey had whispered to Ella that both his nurse and Mrs. Wallace were asleep, and had been awakened by his crying out, but too late to see the 'dark man.' Upon the personal appearance of this gentleman, so vaguely described, it was thought best not to question him, but they all agreed that it was either some reminiscence of the mild Hindoo that haunted the child's dreams, or some fancied metamorphosis of Abra herself. Neither of the two ladies was in the least given to superstition, and though, as it afterwards turned out, Mr. Aird himself had a very pronounced taste for the horrible, he had never developed it in their presence. Ella suggested that the little patient should change his room, whereat Dr. Cooper only shrugged his shoulders: 'That could be done, of course,' he meant to imply, 'but the dark man was no more to be evaded by that means than the black care which sits behind the horseman is to be shaken off by a change of steed.'

'Well, it is my watch to-night,' said Ella, 'and we will try it once more.' And she used the word 'watch' with a meaning; for she was secretly resolved not to go to sleep at all.

Her proper place was in that too comfortable arm-chair in which (as Ella shrewdly suspected) Mrs. Wallace had succumbed to the seductions of Morpheus; but no sooner were the three settled for the night, and Abra, as usual, had fallen fast asleep, than the child besought Ella to lie down beside him—'Then I shall not fear,' he said, 'even if the dark man comes again.'

He had made this request once before, when she had been keeping a shorter watch by his bedside; but she had persuaded him not to press it. Dr. Cooper had told her that to sleep with the child would be to 'fly in the face of Providence'; for, if any mischief was really brewing, she would in that case be certain to suffer from it. But on this occasion the little fellow's appeal was so urgent, and his apprehensions so obvious, that she consented. Though she had never been troubled in that way herself, she had known imaginative girls at school to suffer much from nervousness at night, and her tender heart at once melted within her; and when, as soon as little Davey's arms were round her neck and his fears at rest, he sank into a tranquil slumber, she felt that she had already had her reward.

As she lay very quiet, for fear of disturbing him, her thoughts wandered over her past life, and, as usual, reverted to the mother whom she had never known, and had been tacitly forbidden to speak of. Had she herself, she wondered, when a little child, much younger than Davey, ever lain in loving arms, and been rocked to sleep on a mother's bosom? A dim recollection of a house with a porched door, that looked out upon flowers and shrubs, was all that remained to her of her first home. While still of very tender years she had been transferred to Miss Steele's care, at Minerva House, where no reference to her past had ever been made. The girls, indeed—several batches of whom had

come and gone in her time—had occasionally asked her questions upon that point; but, as it was manifest that she could not gratify their curiosity, the subject was soon dropped. When Davey got well she made up her mind on the first opportunity to endeavour to learn from her father what he could tell her of her own childhood; that was how she put it even to herself. There was something in his studied reticence concerning his wife that forbade her to seek for information more directly. If even he would speak of his own past, she would not feel herself so utterly bereft of all ties of association. It was the absence of these, perhaps, that caused her mind to revert with interest to recent events, and made her exaggerate the claims of mere acquaintanceship. But presently she fell to thinking of Mr. Felspar, who had been so kind to her in regard to her drawing; and then upon Mr. Vernon. Perhaps it was their common affection to her present little companion that induced it; but her thoughts, having arrived at the young poet, dwelt there. What a pleasant face he had, and what a natural and charming manner! How Mr. Aird seemed to like him, and how devoted his friend Felspar was to him! Even his landlady, Mrs. Gammer, had spoken of him, when they called at the cottage, with affectionate enthusiasm. It must be a warm and honest heart that thus attracted every one towards it. Her father, though such a favourite with society, seemed to excite admiration rather than affection in his fellow-creatures, which was no doubt to be accounted for by that very reserve which restricted the demonstration of her own love for him; but Mr. Vernon had the faculty of evoking personal regard. It was fortunate; for, as it happened, he was as destitute of family ties as herself. Open as the day, he had made no secret of the fact that he was alone in the world, and had to win his own way in it. It was but natural that the similarity of their positions in this respect should invest him, in her eyes, with an additional interest. She pictured him, to herself, growing in fame, and worthy of the reputation he was acquiring. Then her thoughts strayed to her own little picture; and would it, or would it not, she wondered, be thought worthy of the honours of print? and, if it should have that good fortune, how pleasant it would be for it to appear side by side with Mr. Vernon's poem! and what a charming souvenir it would form of her visit to Wallington Bay, and of the kind friends she had found there! When she met Mr. Vernon, in after years, he might be a great man; but she was sure he would not have forgotten her, because of that incident of the illustration, and—

‘Ella! Ella!’ whispered Davey, in hushed and frightened tones, ‘there he is!’

‘There *who* is, my darling?’ she answered tenderly. ‘You are dreaming.’

‘No, no! I saw him quite plainly!’ insisted the child, with beating heart. ‘If I dared to look up I should see him again, in his cloak, at the foot of the bed.’

Ella strained her eyes in the direction indicated. There was a night-lamp in the room, which gave a tolerable light, but insufficient to make things distinct. 'Abra! Abra!' she cried.

With a grunt and a snort the Asiatic awoke. 'What is it, Missee Ella?'

'Light the candles. You see, my dear Davey, there is nothing here.'

'I saw him!' answered the child, his large eyes roving apprehensively over the room. 'He stood there—just there—in his long cloak. Papa says it's like a girl to be frightened; but I can't help it.'

'Of course you can't; nobody is frightened who can help it. You shall change your room to-morrow, Davey, I promise you that; and we will keep the candle alight for the rest of the night. Now you will go to sleep again, like a good boy.'

'Es I will, dear Ella.'

She folded him in her arms, and in a few minutes slumber once more overtook him; but Ella remained awake. It might have been fancy—indeed it was folly to suppose otherwise—yet she thought she had seen a vague something at the bed-foot when the child had first cried out. What it was she could not describe; but something with some dim resemblance to a human figure had grown shadowy and disappeared under her gaze. It gave her, she knew not how, the impression of having been more distinct before her attention was called to it. Such delusions have happened to many of us, and, most commonly, when the mind has been disturbed and thrown out of gear by unwonted circumstances. In an ancient portion of an ancestral mansion, cut off from wholesome life, it was not unlikely that an imaginative young girl should have thus partaken of the fevered fancies of her patient. That this would be the view of others, at least, Ella had the good sense to perceive; and what weighed with her much more was the conviction that the revelation of what she had seen, or thought she had seen, would only increase existing troubles. She therefore said nothing about it to her companions, nor did she mention it in the daily letter which she wrote to her father describing, always with gaiety, how life went on in the Prior's Hostel; only, for the future, she took care that Davey's apartment should be occupied by Mr. Aird (whom she justly deemed to be ghost-proof), and *vice versa*.

It was curious, however, in spite of her prudent resolutions, how this strange incident affected not so much her spirits, as her tone of thought, and, from unconscious sympathy, that of her companions. With the little patient, of course, they were always cheerful; but when alone, and not conversing about him, the topics of their talk became more serious, if not more sombre. Something was owing, no doubt, to the tightening bond of friendship, the tendency of which, among its other blessings, is to withdraw us from the commonplace, and to substitute for the

froth of the wave the wave itself. When familiarity reaches a certain point we begin to trot out our hobbies, which may, or may not, be attractive animals. Mr. Aird's was a hearse horse. He had a theory on suicide; he thought that a man had a right to dispose of his own life, if in so doing it did not affect others injuriously. This was vehemently combated by Mrs. Wallace (whose views were mildly Evangelical) upon religious grounds.

'There's nothing against it in the Scriptures,' persisted Mr. Aird. 'What does Miss Josceline say?'

'I don't think a soldier should leave his post before the battle is over,' was the grave reply.

'Ah, that's the military view; but then you see, I am a civilian,' answered Mr. Aird grimly. 'Besides, I am supposing that he has no one to defend but himself.'

Then he began to furnish instances from his own personal experience. One, in particular, of a husband he knew, who, having lost his only child, wrote in the fly-leaf of his Bible to his dead wife, 'There is nobody left now; I have seen all I love leave the earth before me, and I come to you to-night.' They were very interesting stories; but a trifle too much so for his audience, and especially under existing circumstances.

'My dear Mr. Aird, you make our flesh creep!' remonstrated Mrs. Wallace; whereupon he desisted.

Finding the enemy reduced to silence, it was only natural that the lady should fire a last shot. 'You argue,' said Mrs. Wallace, 'that, in the case of wicked people, the very best thing they can do is "to take themselves off," as you call it, since, in so doing, they do the world a service; but how can you tell that if they lived on they would continue to be wicked?'

'Because it is in accordance with experience,' said Mr. Aird. 'Don't you feel growing worse and worse yourself?'

But Mrs. Wallace was not to be put off by jest. There is a secret drawer in most people's minds in which they keep their serious convictions; Mr. Aird had touched it in her case, and out they came. 'You have told us some strange experiences of your own life,' she said; 'let me tell you one of mine. Years ago, when I was a little child, my father went to Exeter for a couple of days, on business, leaving no one in the farmhouse but my aunt Esther, and myself, and some female servants. As our house was in a lonely part of the country, and since burglaries had been recently committed in the neighbourhood, he had proposed, before he went, to leave us some male protector; but my aunt had declined it. She always reminded me of what I have read of Cromwell's troops, being of great courage, and a piety such as I have never seen equalled; only she had no harshness nor uncharitableness to others. She slept alone, in the next room to me, where, for safety's sake, in my father's absence, what little plate we had was kept in an oak chest. When she went to bed at night it was her custom (for I could hear her voice, and if I



listened intently, which I was sometimes tempted to do, her very words) to pray aloud, not only for ourselves, but her fellow-creatures. It was not her way to hope that a handful of human beings only, with herself and friends among them, should be saved, but the whole world, including even the wicked. She was a simple-hearted woman, in whom whatever chanced to come to her ears out of the common made a great impression, and on this occasion what my father had said about the late robberies committed by tramps in the district recurred to her mind. It was "borne in upon her," as she afterwards expressed it, to beseech the Divine compassion in favour of the houseless wretches constrained, perhaps by want as much as evil habit, to break through and steal. I heard her; and then, to my astonishment and alarm, I heard a faint cry of alarm, and then two voices. They spoke together for some time, and then I heard two persons leave the room; and, after a long interval (during which I lay in a state of great trepidation), my aunt returned, and said softly through the door, "Are you asleep, Cicely?" and I answered, "No," and she came in and told me what had happened.

"When she had risen from her knees, and was about to take off her dressing-gown, her eyes fell upon the valance of the bed, from beneath which looked out two other eyes, and on meeting her gaze the person who owned them dragged himself out. He was a man (as she described him) terrible to look upon, of herculean frame, and bloated face, travel-stained and in rags, with a pair of iron-tipped shoes in his hands, which he had taken off in order to reach his late hiding-place without noise; but his voice and manner were in strange contrast to these things.

"*"I came here to-night, lady, to rob your house,"* he said. "I have been lying beneath your bed for hours, rehearsing as to how it should be done, and resolved, if I met any resistance, to do worse than rob, for I am one that sticks at nothing. Then, all of a sudden, as I lay cursing your late hours, I heard you come in and read your Bible, all alone—a thing I have never done myself, except in my prison cell, when I felt pretty sure that the chaplain's eye was at the keyhole.

"*"Well, this is a pious old party,"* I says to myself, 'but I hopes she won't be long.' But when from your Bible you went to prayer, and after praying to God Almighty for your little niece, and this, that, and the other, you came, quite naturally like, to them as never say a word to Him for themselves, and amongst them even for downright bad ones, like me, then says I, 'May I be damned if I takes a penny piece from her, or hurts a hair of her grey head.'" Then replied my aunt in her quiet gentle fashion, "But why, unhappy man, need you be damned at all?"

"It had never struck the poor fellow, I suppose, that there had been any alternative for him, until she went on to explain it, but it is as true as I am sitting here that within five minutes this man was upon his knees repeating a prayer after her, just as a



child might do at his mother's bidding. She afterwards took him downstairs and gave him some supper, of which he stood in great need, but of the money which my aunt pressed upon him he only took a very little, in order, as he said, to keep him from present temptation and set him on an honest road. My aunt made me promise to say nothing of what she told me lest the poor fellow should suffer for it, and we never heard of his getting into trouble again.'

'That is a very curious story, no doubt,' said Mr. Aird. 'I won't be so ill-mannered as to say, as many people would, that it is possible your aunt caught sight of the man before she said her prayers, and framed them to suit his case; but I don't see how the narrative bears upon your argument that wicked people may be turned into good people. Though the man did not rob your aunt, he may have gone on robbing other people.'

'Let me finish my story,' said Mrs. Wallace, quietly. 'Years afterwards, when my aunt, then near her end, was staying at Plymouth for the sake of the sea air, and I was with her, one Sunday morning "a very moving preacher" was advertised to hold forth in a certain chapel; and though the attraction, I confess, was greater to my aunt than to myself, I volunteered to accompany her. The preacher was a large ungainly man, looking more like a prize-fighter than a minister of the gospel; but his words had an impassioned earnestness which I have rarely heard, and which carried the congregation with them. We were too great a distance from him to see his features, but his voice reached every part of the crowded place. His theme was on the saving powers of grace, and in order to show that no man could be so fallen but that he might be raised up again, he evidenced an extreme case within his own experience. "I knew a man once," he said, "who was a greater sinner than any here. He owned no Father in Heaven, no brother on Earth; his trade was robbery; by day he was a thief, and by night a house-breaker."'

"Oh, Aunt," whispered I, "did you hear that?"

"Yes, my dear," she answered softly; "that is the very man himself: I knew him directly I heard his voice."

'Then he went on, point by point, to describe what had happened on that eventful night at our home, and how that from the hour at which he had heard my aunt at her prayers he had become a new and honest man; which (to cut a long story short) we afterwards found on inquiry to be the case. He had a shoemaker's shop in the town, where for years he had been much respected. So you see, Mr. Aird, that wicked people need not always put an end to themselves in despair of becoming good.'

'Unfortunately, my dear madam, they very seldom do,' returned the old Indian drily; 'my experience is that they remain to plague the good people as much as possible. But I am glad to find that your felonious friend had some other trade than

sensational preaching, which is, in my opinion, no very great improvement upon burglary with violence.'

It was thus that the little party in the Prior's Hostel conversed together, on a footing more confidential and familiar than would have been possible had they been at large in the world without; and though there was no uniformity (and even, as we have seen, considerable disagreement) among them as to opinion, they were becoming close friends.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A CHANGE OF PATIENTS.

WE have been told by the lips of the wise that if we poor mortals knew what was going to happen to us—whether of good or ill—we should not find it an improvement; the nervous and despondent would, it is true, no longer make themselves miserable with imaginary sorrows, but the real ones would throw such a gigantic shadow before them as would make such men's condition even worse; while, on the other hand, the sanguine would be robbed of their hopes. The argument, no doubt, is a sound one, but nevertheless the unexpectedness of human life is one of its terrors. In the clearest sky, when all is sunshine, the clouds will hurry up from the most unlooked-for quarters, and the thunderbolt of misfortune falls; and again, when the clouds, as it would seem, have done their worst, and all has been so dark so long that some gleam of sunshine seems inevitable, the thunderbolt still falls. It is like luck at cards, which defies the doctrine of chances and puts the theory of probabilities to shame; and on the whole, or so it seems to us ungrateful mortals, it is such bad luck.

Little Davey's illness was blowing over, the fever was abating, and, what was better, losing its more dangerous features, so that Dr. Cooper was in two minds as to letting the party in the Prior's Hostel out of quarantine, when a pleasant surprise happened to two of them. The three were at breakfast together as usual (for the Doctor had made a point of their not taking their meals in the sick room), when two little parcels came by post, one containing the prettiest gold watch and chain for Mrs. Wallace, and the other a sparkling locket for Miss Josceline.

'Goodness gracious!' cried the former simply, 'this can surely never be for me; there must be some mistake.'

But Ella, though greatly surprised, had no doubt as to who had sent the presents, for her locket was the facsimile in shape of the one she had picked up in Abbot's Creek. Of the value of its coat of diamonds she was wholly ignorant; but she at once understood that the intention of the donor was to express his two-

fold gratitude to her, first for the recovery of his wife's portrait, and secondly for her attendance on his child.

'Oh, Mr. Aird!' she cried with a grateful blush, 'you are too kind. I have never seen anything so beautiful.'

'I'm glad you like it, my dear young lady,' replied the old gentleman, going on with his egg; 'you must wear it for Davey's sake and mine. The same remark applies to your watch, Mrs. Wallace.'

'But it is so much too good for me,' remonstrated that lady in a rapture.

'I am sorry to contradict you for about the hundredth time since we've been shut up together,' observed Mr. Aird drily; 'but nothing is too good for either of you.'

'Oh, I wish I could get out to show it my husband,' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace.

'And I to show my locket to papa,' cried Ella.

'From what Cooper said yesterday,' observed Mr. Aird, 'I think our prison doors will be opened to-morrow. By-the-by, what's that under the door?'

The morning letters now arrived in that fashion as all other correspondence from without; but this was not like an ordinary letter. It was much larger, though very thin, and it was directed to Miss Josceline.'

'No more lockets, surely?' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace, laughing.

It was not; but it was something that gave Ella even a greater pleasure than the locket had given her. It was a proof of her illustration to Vernon's poem of the 'Italian Boy,' and of course gave indisputable evidence that the picture had been accepted by the 'Mayfair Keepsake.'

To all young people—and for that matter to old ones also—there are few joys to be compared with that of seeing their own effusions for the first time in print; and as with the writer so with the artist, and (what is curious) especially with the indifferent artist. A poem looks ever so much better of course in print than in MS., but it is not to be compared with the improvement that takes place in a picture indifferently executed, which has been through the hands of the wood engraver. The skilled draughtsman complains, and often with justice, that his work suffers grievously from subsequent manipulation after it has left his hands; but with the novice the reverse is the case. A good engraver will supply defects, if he does not absolutely improve upon the original. At all events, whether from that cause, or from the modest opinion of her own performance, Ella thought much more highly of her 'Italian Boy' in his new shape than in his old one. To her, moreover, it meant a great deal more than the mere gratification of a pardonable vanity; it gave her material hope; it was, or so it seemed to her, the first round of the ladder which might lead her in after-years, not to competence indeed

(for her views were very humble), but to self-support. If such things were worth printing, she supposed that they must needs be worth paying for—however small might be the honorarium, it would be something; and she felt that she could do a good many such drawings without much injury to her brain-tissue. Besides the picture, there had come the poem it illustrated, which she read with great approbation, and with such interest and attention that when she had read it a second time she found she had got it by heart. It was because she admired it so—and much more, however incredible it may seem, than her own illustration—that she could not help showing them both to Mrs. Wallace, who fell into raptures about the wrong one. She thought the picture ‘so pretty,’ and Ella a perfect miracle of intelligence for having drawn it: as to the poem, she frankly confessed herself no judge of such things, but had always heard Mr. Vernon was very clever. Directly she had spoken, Ella regretted having been so confidential; the word ‘clever,’ so far from being the right term to use, sounded somehow almost depreciating; and it also struck her that Mr. Vernon might not relish her having exposed him to such criticism. Moreover, what was still worse, before she could restrain Mrs. Wallace’s enthusiasm that lady had summoned Mr. Aird to ‘come and look at Miss Josceline’s beautiful drawing, which covered the poor girl with confusion. It was one thing to have confided her secret to a motherly friend of her own sex, and quite another to share it with Mr. Aird.

‘Poems are not much in my way,’ said that gentleman with his usual frankness, ‘but the picture is charming; I had no idea you were an artist, Miss Ella.’

‘Nor I either,’ replied she with an uncomfortable laugh; ‘Mrs. Wallace ought not to have shown it to you.’

‘There is nothing to be ashamed of, I am sure,’ said Mr. Aird good-naturedly, but also with a certain gravity which did not escape her. ‘Are you in the habit of illustrating Mr. Vernon’s poems?’

‘I have never done but this one. How could it be otherwise?’ inquired Ella simply, but with a blush that would rise to her cheek in spite of all her efforts.

‘To be sure; you’ve only known him a few days, have you?’ was the quiet reply. ‘The proof-sheet is damp, I see; he has lost no time in sending you what he knew would give you pleasure.’

‘I don’t know whether he sent it, or Mr. Felspar,’ said Ella; ‘they were both very kind about my little drawing—I mean about helping me to get it published.’

‘It is Mr. Vernon’s handwriting,’ remarked Mr. Aird drily, ‘so it is probable it was he who sent it.’

Then Mrs. Wallace burst out laughing.

‘Why do you laugh?’ inquired Ella, feeling almost angry with that excellent lady, though she could not have explained, even to herself, why she should be so.



'Mrs. Wallace laughs,' said Mr. Aird, 'because she thinks you had not much doubt in your own mind as to which of those young gentlemen sent the picture. But you see I am not so rude. I am as grave as a judge, which, indeed, I was at one time. But there is Dr. Cooper. Will he let us out of prison to-day or not, I wonder?'

Ella esteemed the good doctor greatly, but his arrival had never been so welcome to her as it was at that particular moment.

She was not one of those young ladies who rather like being rallied about a young gentleman's attentions to them than otherwise, but the question presented itself even to her (and added to her embarrassment), Would she have taken it to heart so much, if her heart had not been concerned in the matter?

It fortunately happened that she had at once something else to think of, for the Doctor's verdict was that the child was convalescent, and that all danger might now be considered over, whether as regarded himself or others, and in a few minutes Ella was clasped in her father's arms.

'You are not looking well, papa?' were her first anxious words.

'I am quite well, darling,' was his reply; 'though perhaps "none the better," as the schoolboys say, "for seeing you." Extreme joy, you know, has sometimes the same effect as sorrow. Now tell me how you have fared in your prison-house?'

There was not much to tell him that had not been already told in her daily bulletins, save what had occurred that very morning.

'Dear papa, I hope—indeed I am *sure* you will be pleased to hear that my little picture has been accepted by the magazine. And only see how much better it looks in print.'

'It does, my dear,' he answered quietly; 'but I have seen it already. Mr. Vernon was so good as to bring a duplicate of it for me when he brought yours.'

'Did he come himself, then? That was very kind of him,' said Ella impulsively; the next moment the recollection of Mrs. Wallace's badinage occurred to her, and she turned crimson.

'Yes,' said Mr. Josceline, keeping his eyes fixed on her face, which increased her confusion, 'he came in person, and we had some conversation together. He is an estimable young man for his station in life, no doubt, but seems to entertain peculiar opinions.'

'He is very well-meaning, I think,' said Ella, rather inappositely.

Mr. Vernon had been kind to her, and she felt bound to say what she could for him; and the tone in which her father had spoken of him had been sufficiently severe and curt.

'No doubt,' he replied; 'I don't wish to imply that his opinions are bad or vicious, but only that they are not the views



entertained by persons of our class. They are what I suppose would be termed Bohemian, which it is only natural they should be. He is not quite the sort of man I should wish a son of mine—and still less a daughter—to be familiar with.'

'I am very sorry,' said Ella simply.

'Why should you be sorry, my dear? It is not likely that you and he will again be thrown together even so casually as has happened here. Your paths in life will necessarily be far apart. You must thank him, of course, though, from what he said to me, I gather that you are at least equally indebted in the matter to Mr. Felspar for the service he has done you—since you seem to consider it of some importance—and there will be an end of it.'

'Very well, papa.'

There was no despair in her tone, such as he almost feared there would be, but there was genuine disappointment. She would like to have drawn more pictures for the 'Keepsake,' and to have illustrated more poems of Mr. Vernon's. This partnership in art and letters had a certain inexplicable charm for her.

'What is that you have in your hand, my darling?' inquired Mr. Josceline, after a long and somewhat uncomfortable pause. 'The case looks promising, as if it came from a jeweller's shop.'

'Oh, the locket!' But a few minutes ago she had pictured to herself the pleasure with which she should show Mr. Aird's present to her father, but now all that seemed to have faded away; the matter had become almost indifferent to her.

'What locket? Dear me, who could have given you this?' He had opened the case, and was regarding the splendid gift with admiration. 'It must have been some very generous person.'

'It was, papa. Mr. Aird sent for it from London by way of thanks, as I suppose, for my nursing little Davey, which I am sure I should have been glad to do at all events. It is altogether too rich a guerdon for so slight a service.'

'It is very handsome, certainly, my dear; but you must not underrate your own deserts. It is very natural that a man of generous nature, like Mr. Aird, should have endeavoured to show himself sensible of them.'

'But is it not very costly? I know nothing about such things, but if these are real diamonds——'

'Well, I don't think it's very likely, Ella,' put in Mr. Josceline, smiling, 'that Mr. Aird would have given you paste. If I am not mistaken, this did not cost less than eighty guineas.'

'Eighty guineas! Oh, papa! And he has given Mrs. Wallace a gold watch and chain.'

'Indeed! Well, doubtless to a man of Mr. Aird's fortune such things are but flea-bites; still it is very creditable to him. He must (as I always suspected) have a noble nature. May I look inside, my dear?'

'Inside the locket? Of course, papa. Why do you ask such a question?' inquired Ella, in unaffected surprise.

‘Well, I didn’t know,’ he answered with a smile of significance. ‘These little *cadeaux* are sometimes of a private nature. They sometimes contain a portrait of the donor, for example. However, this is empty, I see, at present.’

‘Yes. By-the-by, Mr. Aird was so good as to promise, papa, that he would get me a photograph of little Davey to put in it; and then, as I said to him, the other side I shall devote to one of yourself.’

‘I think you should not have said that, Ella,’ said Mr. Josceline gravely; ‘it was hardly gracious. You might have asked Mr. Aird for his own picture. However, it is very gratifying—very.’ He drew his daughter towards him and kissed her tenderly.

‘Why do you sigh, dear papa?’ said Ella, alarmed by the expression of her father’s face even more than by that evidence of emotion. ‘I am sure you are not well.’

‘Yes, darling; I am well enough, as well as I ever shall be, that is, the least thing that excites me——’ and Mr. Josceline fell back in his chair with a groan of pain.

Ella flew to the bell, and then to her father’s side. ‘Esther, tell Dr. Cooper to come to papa directly. He has not left the house, I think, but if he has, send for him *at once*.’

Ella was frightened, but she was not one of those whom alarm deprives of their presence of mind.

She loosened her father’s neckerchief and wheeled his chair to the window.

In a few minutes, which seemed, however, an age to her, Dr. Cooper arrived.

‘Oh, Doctor, what is the matter?’ she whispered, after he had felt the now unconscious patient’s pulse and made his investigations.

‘My poor child, you must bear up,’ said he evasively; ‘it is very hard for you to have to be sick nurse so soon again.’

Then two of the hotel servants came in and carried her father up to his room, and he was put to bed. And Ella took her place by his pillow.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### A FEMALE CHAMPION.

ON the very morning that Mr. Josceline was taken ill, and while the inmates of the *Ultramarine* were for the most part unconscious of that event, a curious scene took place in the ladies’ drawing-room. This apartment was intended for the use, not only of the fair sex, but of such gentlemen as had female belongings; but, thanks to the awe inspired by Mrs. Armytage, it was seldom intruded upon by males. That excellent lady was fond of

reading yesterday's newspaper (at Wallington Bay it arrived the morning after publication) not only aloud, but in a fine sonorous voice which demanded attention; and, though women will endure considerable infliction of that kind, men will not. Poor Mr. Percival-Lott, having ventured one morning within these sacred precincts in search of his wife (which made her more suspected, by-the-by, of being a bride than ever), was seized by the glittering eye of Mrs. Armytage, and compelled to listen to three leading articles, with that lady's comments thereon, before he could make his escape. After which terrible experience the place was shunned of man.

On the occasion, therefore, to which we refer, only ladies were present: as it happened, all those with whom we have made acquaintance, except Mrs. Wallace, were of the party. There was no danger from the newspaper at present, for it was airing, as usual, by the kitchen fire, and every one was engaged with the correspondence which had arrived for them by the morning's post. Mrs. Armytage, who had always a perfect sheaf of letters, was selecting such passages from them as she deemed adapted for public reading, chiefly concerning the experiences of the Browns and Joneses of her acquaintance with their domestic servants; but 'Oh, indeed' or 'You don't say so' were the only signs of interest she had succeeded in exciting; when suddenly she cried, 'Oh, good gracious!' and every one looked up at her, as well they might, in wonder. Her face was red with excitement; her eyes were gleaming with fire; the hand that held the communication she had just opened fairly trembled with agitation.

'Oh, the villain!' she cried; 'the treacherous, hypocritical villain!'

One would really have thought that some one had been trifling with her mature affections, and that she had found him out.

'What is the matter?' inquired Mrs. Jennynges.

'Everything is the matter,' was the other's comprehensive reply. 'We have been imposed upon, tricked, made fools of; and of all the people in this world, by Mr. Josceline. He's an impostor.'

'Why, you don't mean to say that he is not an Honourable after all?' exclaimed Mrs. Percival-Lott, who had certainly treated the gentleman in question with an affability (to say the least of it) that she would not have accorded to any male unconnected with the aristocracy. She made a picture in her brain of a swindler of the first class, who among other goods obtained under false pretences, could boast of some fancy articles.

'He may be an Honourable by birth,' replied Mrs. Armytage, 'but his behaviour has been very much the reverse of it.'

Mrs. Percival-Lott gave a sigh of relief. It was a comfort to find that whatever he had done he was still genuine.

'You don't mean to say that he is a married man?' inquired Mrs. Jennynges, in such a quavering voice that, had Mrs. Army-

tage had her senses about her as usual, she would have drawn her deductions from it at once; but her mind was too much occupied with the tremendous news she had in store, to pay attention to anything else.

'Married! He is far worse than married,' cried she. 'He is a disgraced clergyman; his living is sequestered' (a slight mistake of Mrs. Armytage's for 'sequestrated'; but what matters a syllable or two in such a revelation?); 'he is a disgraced and abandoned man.'

'But what has he *done*?' inquired Miss Jennynge, who, unlike her mother, had borne the astounding intelligence with much fortitude, and was greedily desirous of details.

'Done? Well, something, I suppose, too dreadful to tell, since my informant does not go into it. The idea of his having given himself such airs and graces! For besides all this, the man hasn't a penny to bless himself with.'

'Oh dear, dear me,' murmured Mrs. Jennynge to herself, her castle in the air subsiding into a cottage at once, and not a cottage *ornée* either. 'I wonder whether he will return my ring?'

'His whole story, which I have from the most reliable of sources, is most discreditable,' continued Mrs. Armytage. 'His wife was a person of low extraction, and ran away from him. That must have been Miss Ella's mother, you know.'

'I confess I never quite took to that girl,' observed Mrs. Percival-Lott. 'There was something—what shall I call it?'

'Something of a *bourgeois* type about her, you would say,' suggested Miss Jennynge.

'Just so,' said Mrs. Armytage, for once showing a sign of adhesion to her young friend's opinion. 'Her instincts were low. I remember when there was some talk of a hateful common steamer touching at Wallington once a week, she absolutely rather advocated it than otherwise, upon the ground that poor people had a right to enjoy themselves.'

'That was two words for herself, it seems, and one for them,' observed Miss Jennynge, acidly, 'if what Mrs. Armytage tells us of Mr. Josceline's means is correct.'

'It is quite correct, every word of it,' insisted Mrs. Armytage, 'though I cannot give up my informant's name.'

'But that's important, too,' observed Mrs. Jennynge, who, in this sudden wreck of her aspirations, was rather inclined to look out for spars.

'It is a lady of my own acquaintance, and whose word may be believed as though it were my own,' observed Mrs. Armytage, tartly.

'Still, if the thing could be proved in any way—for instance, to begin with, that Mr. Josceline had been disgraced—it would be more satisfactory,' remarked Miss Jennynge, naively.

'I'll tell you how we'll do it,' exclaimed Mrs. Armytage, clapping her hands; 'we'll ask him to say grace at dinner to-night. Then we shall see how he takes it.'

‘That’s a capital idea,’ cried Mrs. Percival-Lott. ‘What fun it will be—at least I mean, what an interesting moment when you put the question to him!’

‘Oh, but *I* shan’t put it,’ said Mrs. Armytage, hastily. ‘I think, considering the—the *very* friendly terms in which Mr. Josceline has been placed with Mrs. and Miss Jennynge—taking coffee in their rooms and what not—it is obviously their place—indeed, it seems to me they owe it in reparation to the rest of us for having encouraged him—to—in short, they must bell the cat.’

‘What have I to do with the cat?’ inquired Mrs. Jennynge, wildly; ‘I hate cats.’

‘My dear madam, it is a well-known proverb,’ explained Mrs. Armytage. ‘What I mean is, that it is you who should ask Mr. Josceline to say grace this evening.’

‘I wouldn’t do it, if it was ever so,’ exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge, who in this extremity had utterly discarded her French for the vernacular. ‘You try it yourself, and see if he don’t put you down pretty quick, or send you flying with a flea in your ear.’

‘A flea in my ear!’ echoed Mrs. Armytage, with contemptuous disgust.

‘It’s a well-known proverb,’ retorted Mrs. Jennynge, in her turn. ‘Oh yes, I should just like to see you at it.’

Though somewhat vulgarly expressed, this sentiment was entertained by the whole party. They thought Mrs. Armytage’s plan a most excellent one, provided only that she executed it herself.

‘Perhaps, after all, it should come from a gentleman rather than a lady,’ observed Mrs. Armytage; ‘suppose you get your husband to do it, Mrs. Lott?’

‘*My* husband! Certainly not,’ returned the lady addressed. ‘Why not *your* husband? The Professor would do it capitally.’

‘The Professor is the very man,’ said Mrs. Jennynge. She did not mean it sarcastically, but really looked forward to the incident as being a gratifying gratuitous exhibition: but this innocent expression of feeling gave great offence.

‘Do you suppose, madam, that *my* husband, Professor Timothy Armytage, a man of European reputation, is going to mix himself up with an hotel scandal!’

‘Hoity toity!’ retorted Mrs. Percival-Lott. ‘And why not your husband as much as my husband?’

A question not to be answered: fortunately at this moment there was a diversion: Mrs. Wallace entered the room with a grave face.

‘My dear Mrs. Wallace, I am so glad you are come,’ exclaimed Mrs. Armytage, graciously. ‘You are the very person we wish to see. A matter of very serious importance to us all has just taken place—that is, we have just come to the knowledge of it—and your good husband is the very person to get us out of our difficulty.’



'The very man,' whispered Miss Jennynge to Mrs. Percival-Lott. 'I heard him say, "What! no grace?" the first day he came to the *table-d'hôte*. He will now have an opportunity of supplying the omission.'

'I am sure my husband will be ready to do any one a kindness,' observed Mrs. Wallace, simply.

'And this is a kindness,' said Mrs. Armytage, decisively; 'certainly to us, and I may say even to Mr. Josceline himself, since it is to put a stop to his career of duplicity.'

'Duplicity! and Mr. Josceline! What do you mean?' interrupted Mrs. Wallace, speaking with great emotion. 'Pray say nothing against Mr. Josceline just now, madam, even if it is true, which I very much doubt. Don't you know what has happened?'

'No—what?' inquired Mrs. Armytage, as greedy for more gossip as a tiger who has tasted blood for gore.

'What? what?' reiterated the other ladies.

'Well, Mr. Josceline has just been taken seriously ill; he has been carried upstairs and put to bed.'

'That's his art,' observed Mrs. Armytage, incredulously. 'He has had a hint that his duplicity has been discovered. To take to one's bed is a very old diplomatic device.'

'Mrs. Armytage,' returned Mrs. Wallace, with a severity that would have astonished herself had she been conscious of it; 'if what you have to say against Mr. Josceline is false, it is shameful; and if it is true, to say it now is shameful likewise. You are speaking of a dying man.'

'A dying man! How dreadful!' exclaimed Mrs. Jennynge, in quavering tones; 'you are always saying dreadful things, Mrs. Wallace.'

'I am only saying what Dr. Cooper has just told me, that Mr. Josceline's life must be counted by hours. There is no hope.'

'Still,' urged Mrs. Armytage, irritated at being taken to task—and, as was evident, with the approval of the company—by a lady so inferior to her in the social scale, 'the truth must be told, we are taught, even of the dead.'

'If this man has imposed upon us, Mrs. Armytage,' interrupted Mrs. Wallace, in a terrible voice, "'this man," as you call him, is about to appear before his Maker. What matters it what may be your judgment of him or mine? Moreover, if you have no reverence for the dead, respect the living, and be silent. Remember, Mr. Josceline has a daughter.'

Mrs. Armytage opened her mouth twice to speak, but opened it in vain. She only gasped like a fish out of water; while Mrs. Wallace, keeping her eyes fixed upon her with withering scorn, moved slowly, nay (so bravely did her indignation bear her up) almost majestically, from the room.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## DYING WORDS.

It is most common for the doctors to err (or to pretend to err) in the case of the sick on the side of hopefulness. They say, 'We have seen persons even worse, who have got over it: we are not prepared to say there is no hope' (indeed, when they are prepared to go to that length, matters are serious indeed); or, 'To-morrow we shall be able to speak with greater certainty,' when, in fact, they have private doubts whether the patient will not have 'another morn than ours.' But sometimes, misled by pulse and feature, and ignorant of the mental vitality of a man—the vigorous will that for a season will bid defiance to death itself—they fix the date of dissolution too early. Mrs. Wallace had but repeated Dr. Cooper's words when she said that Mr. Josceline's life was now to be measured by hours. But the hours were more than he had reckoned upon. They reached to days. What days they were to Ella, can only be imagined by those who have watched the parting from them of their only earthly tie. She had often thought of such a contingency, of course, though it was an idea she had always put from her, as though to dwell upon it had been to hasten the event; but it was so different, so far as the sufferer was concerned, from all she had ever pictured it to be. There was resignation in its completeness almost sublime, but somehow with little that could be called divine about it; and there was patience. Once only, when she whispered in trembling tones, 'Dear papa, would you like to see a clergyman?' did he show symptoms of irritation. His reply was a simple 'No;' but uttered with a vehemence that astounded almost as much as it shocked her. There had not seemed to be life enough in him to have so expressed himself. For the most part he lay motionless, with her hand in his, looking at her with silent pity.

'I ought to have left you better off,' he would murmur twenty times in the day.

At first she answered him, 'What does it matter? Oh, dear papa, don't let my future trouble you; let nothing trouble you now.' By which she meant nothing but solicitude for his own future.

Mr. Josceline's only world, however, was the world he knew thoroughly; and though he was careful not to say so, she came by degrees and very unwillingly to be aware of this. She found it of no use to hint to him of heavenly things, and how, being his daughter, could she do more than hint of them to him? She was

compelled to content herself, when he would begin anew to speak of the poverty he had entailed on her, to answer nothing, but only to smile on him (a smile it cost her agonies to compass), and shake her head in deprecation of the topic. On the morning after his seizure the Doctor found his patient had rallied, so much so that if there had been any road to recovery, it would have been a good sign; but there was no road.

‘Mr. Vernon and Mr. Felspar have come to inquire after you,’ he said, in that cheery but pitiful tone which in the sick room implies so much.

‘Mr. Vernon! I should like to see Mr. Vernon,’ murmured the patient.

‘Oh, papa, are you equal to it?’ pleaded Ella anxiously. Mr. Josceline had closed his eyes, but the Doctor answered for him: ‘Your father knows best, my dear young lady: it is better not to thwart him.’

It was the same case with him now (as she well understood, poor girl), as with those who, in their last hours, fancy this or that to eat; they are given what they like, since nothing can harm (nor, alas! help) them.

While some one was being despatched for the young man, Mr. Josceline withdrew his hand from Ella’s grasp. ‘Leave me, darling; it will be but for a minute.’

She obeyed him instantly, yet not before her gaze had met Mr. Vernon’s as he entered the room. The expression of his face was very soft and sad (she knew he was pitying her from the very bottom of his heart), but it wore scarce a sign of recognition. His eyes turned reverently towards the bed, on which lay the dying man. It was the natural action of a gentle nature; but if he had been the most sagacious of schemers he could not have found a nearer road to the young girl’s heart.

Mr. Josceline made a sign to his visitor to take Ella’s vacant chair. ‘You did not expect to see me so soon again,’ he whispered, ‘nor like this.’

Vernon would have uttered some commonplace of hope or comfort, but the sick man held up a warning finger.

‘There is no time for smooth speeches; I am dying. One thing alone comforts me. What I spoke to you about the other day, when you brought the picture, has come to pass. My daughter’s future has been secured.’

In spite of his effort at self-command, Vernon turned pale; he asked some question with his lips which his tongue refused to utter.

‘Yes, in that way,’ answered the dying man, who understood him perfectly; ‘she is engaged, or as good as engaged, to be married. You have no right to complain of it, and you have no power to prevent it.’

Vernon shook his head and smiled bitterly. ‘I know it,’ he murmured.

‘Nevertheless,’ continued the other, ‘a base and wicked man, who only thought about himself, might, in your place, do my daughter much hurt.’

‘God forbid.’

‘I say “Amen” to that. Remember the promise you gave to me the other day. The time has come earlier than we expected for its fulfilment, that is all. There was then one alternative—the thousand a year. I have no breath to lose—are you listening?’

‘Yes, yes.’

He was listening, though his gaze had wandered from the sick man to the door through which Ella had passed into an inner room.

‘There is now only one course. She will leave this place at once. Do you understand?’

‘I will keep my promise,’ answered the young man hoarsely.

‘I believe your word. You have an honest heart; you are not a liar. Good-bye.’

Vernon put his hand in the dying man’s, who clasped it feebly. ‘Do not see her, either now nor afterwards; go at once. Remember, remember.’

Vernon rose slowly. He felt as one who carries a great burden. The vigour and elasticity of his limbs seemed to have departed. He moved slowly and mournfully out of the room. Ella glided in and took her place once more by the bedside.

‘An honest lad, a good lad,’ murmured the sick man, unconscious of her presence. ‘A hard lot; a hard world.’ Then he raised his eyelids and beheld her. ‘What was I saying, darling? Was I dreaming?’

‘You said it was a hard world, dear papa.’

‘Then I was not dreaming,’ was the bitter rejoinder. After a while his mind began to wander, or so it seemed to her who listened to its utterances.

‘I wish I had married her,’ he muttered. ‘In a fortnight—in a month at most—I could have saved her.’

‘Saved whom, dear papa?’

‘You.’

His mind, she thought, was certainly wandering, and, as often happens, it continued to harp on the same string. ‘Only a few weeks more and she would have been beyond the reach of want,’ he murmured. ‘Would that I had married her! Too late! too late! I tried to do it, darling, for your sake.’

‘Tried to do what, dear papa?’ inquired Ella, more to soothe him than with any expectation of getting a reasonable reply.

‘To marry the Jennynge.’

‘The Jennynge! Do you mean Miss Jennynge? Oh, papa! exclaimed Ella, so horrified at her father’s words that for a moment she forgot his condition.

‘No, not Anastasia; her mother. I could have got half her money settled upon you.’

'Is it I, or my father, who is out of his wits?' was Ella's first reflection, 'or can my ears have been mistaken?' But though Mr. Josceline's voice was low, it was not indistinct; and though his eyes were dim they showed no sign of mental aberration. He lay quite quiet, and with a melancholy and thoughtful face, like one who reviews that past which he cannot recall. All the dim suspicions that had ever flitted across her mind, about her father scheming for her supposed welfare, now took definite shape. They shocked her, but aroused no indignation against him. She even felt a pity for his disappointment in them, though she did not share it. Nay, she felt grateful to him; for though he had been so mistaken and so wrong, had he not done all, or failed in all, for her sake? And yet it was so terrible to her that his mind should be occupied with such reflections at such a time. 'Dearest papa,' she whispered tenderly, 'don't think about such matters any more. I shall do very well.'

'Yes, yes,' he answered eagerly, 'if you are only prudent. A prize, a great prize, is within your grasp. Remember when I am gone, you have no friend, no home, and, alas, alas! you are penniless.'

'Do not think of me, dear papa.'

'Whom then should I think of?' replied the dying man, with irritation. Then in feebler and broken tones, 'Would that I had thought of you earlier! That is what weighs upon me now, heavier than the hand of death itself.'

Perceiving that it was useless to attempt to divert him from this all-engrossing topic, Ella strove to find some crumb of comfort in the wished-for direction.

'You are well-born, dear papa, and have rich relations. Since the contemplation of the future troubles you so, why not apply to them?'

'Never,' replied the dying man through his clenched teeth. 'Never. They would spurn you from their doors. If they opened them, and you went in, I would never forgive you. Curse them!'

'Oh, papa, papa, pray do not speak so. I will never ask them for a penny; I will not be indebted to them for a night's lodging. Be assured of that, since you forbid me. But do not speak so.'

'A girl of spirit,' he murmured approvingly. 'Her father's child. There is some money in my desk, and there is some more due at the month's end, if I live to claim it. It is but ten days to the end of the month; but there—I might as well say it is but ten years. Listen, listen! Mrs. Wallace is a good woman; stick to Mrs. Wallace. Go with her away from this. I trust his word, but he must not see you. I tell you, you must go away.'

'I will do whatever you wish, papa.'

'A good girl. Her father's darling, his *darling*. You will give him your address; and tell him he may write to you.'

Again Ella doubted her own ears. Was it possible that after all he was not averse to her correspondence with Mr. Vernon?



She did not think of him as her lover. 'All these things had ceased to be,' in the awful shadow of the coming presence, but she recalled the fact that her father had objected to her forming any intimacy with the young man.

'Ask him,' continued Mr. Josceline, 'since you are going away, to let you have his photograph to put in your locket; that will seem only natural. Do you hear me?'

'I hear you, dear papa; but are you speaking of Mr. Aird?'

'Of course I am.' Again he expressed himself with vigour, and the effort it cost him seemed to deprive him of all remaining strength. After a long pause he spoke once more, in a voice perceptibly weaker, 'You said you would do all I wish, Ella; and this is my dying wish—that you should marry Mr. Aird.'

'Marry Mr. Aird!' The words dropped from her lips one by one as though to assure herself they were indeed the same she had heard and not counterfeit; she looked up into her father's face with an amazement that turned suddenly to horror by reason of what she saw there.

'Doctor Cooper, Doctor Cooper!' she cried out, and in a moment the doctor was standing beside her. He glanced a moment at the lifeless, lightless features, and then gently but firmly took her hand.

'You must come away, my dear young lady,' he said; 'your father is no longer here.'

'He is not dead,' she cried. 'Oh no; he cannot be dead. He was not thinking of death, he was only thinking of me.'

'He was quite right,' returned the doctor, calmly. 'He was thinking of your future and not his own. I honour him for it. Kiss him, child, and come away.'

He spoke to her and treated her as if she had really been but a child. He held her while she stooped down and kissed the dead man's face; he supported her with his arm into the next room, and, placing her in a chair with her white face hid in her hands, he left her alone with her sorrow. The blow had utterly overwhelmed her, its suddenness had been so far merciful that it had numbed her sense of loss; the retina of her mind was at first only able to retain its last impression. Could it be possible that that was a correct one? The wildest nightmare dream she had ever experienced had never suggested to her anything more monstrous than the injunction that had dropped from her dying father's lips. Yet there were the words engraved as it were with some acid that burned into her very core, 'I wish you to marry Mr. Aird.' Presently they began to fade away before the slowly growing perception of what had happened afterwards. He was dead. His voice, his smile, were gone. The kindly gracious man who called her daughter, and whom all the little world she had ever known bowed down to in admiration, was no more. The circumstance of her own desolation did not strike her at first so much as a vague sense of loss. She beheld the general void

rather than the empty place beside her. Then came the isolation; the awful sense of her utter loneliness in the world. Not a soul to care for her, not one human being bound to her by tie of blood or nearness. No heart to love her. Here a little hand stole into her own, and a child's voice whispered tenderly in her ear, 'Don't cry, Ella: don't cry, darling. We are so sorry for you. I do love you so. Don't you know me? I'm little Davey.'

Then the tears came for the first time; she threw her arms about the child and hugged him to her bosom; and hid her face in his, and sobbed with him and he with her, as though their hearts would break together.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

THERE is plenty of kindness in the world—but largely mingled with the fear of incurring responsibility. In our hour of sorrow, that much-despised class of persons who act on instinct come to the front, and win our hearts while the wise and the prudent are picking their words. The promises of the former may be piecrust, but their present sympathy is sincere and of incalculable value. They do not give twice but ten times over who give quickly; and even if they have nothing to give, their obvious desire to be of service is a material help.

The touch of little Davey's cheek as it nestled up to Ella's was worth very much to her, though it might not have been favourably discounted in the City. When she looked out through her dim eyes at the world again, there was sunshine in it—a streak of light among the menacing masses of cloud.

'Papa told me to say, only I forgot it,' said Davey, 'that whatever you wished should be done at once. That he was—I don't remember what he said exactly—but I know he loves you almost as much as I do.'

The streak of light vanished away from poor Ella's mental horizon, and a sharp chill, as from a November sky, seized her.

'Tell your father that I am obliged to him,' she answered firmly; 'but that I want nothing. You should not stop here, darling. It is not fit for you. Go and play.'

Nothing loth, for a child is soon tired of another's sorrow, Davey got off her lap. 'I'll give papa your love,' he said. 'Shall I?'

'Tell him what I told you to say, Davey; that I am obliged to him—deeply obliged to him—but that I want nothing.'

There was a knock at the door; the same door at which the child had doubtless entered, not that which opened into the chamber of death. Ella's heart beat fast. Was it possible, while

her father's body was hardly cold, that Mr. Aird should himself be coming to offer assistance to her in person?

That such an idea should have entered her mind—that any thought at all should have done so save that of her bereavement, may seem strange; but the fact was that the one fact suggested the other. Her father, and her father's dying words, were for the moment indissolubly associated in her mind together.

'Oh, Mrs. Wallace!' The pathetic welcome in her voice would have moved a harder heart than that of the wife of the Devonshire yeoman. There was genuine gratitude in it, but also an expression of relief which of course that lady did not understand.

'My pretty dear,' she sobbed—'my own pretty dear! What *can* we do for you?'

She did not mean what she could do herself, nor what she and her husband could do (though that, of course, was included), but what could the whole world do for this desolate and orphaned girl, to show its tenderness and sympathy? She did not know that she herself was a woman of ten thousand. She spoke believing herself to be a common type of humanity, and had come to comfort her in the name of it. She was one of those simple ones who, in all sincerity, would have asked, 'When saw we thee hungry and gave thee meat?' It was her nature to do such things and not to remember them. Ella could only blindly kiss her, and thank her with a hand-clasp.

'You must not stay here, my darling,' continued the old lady. 'You must come into my room. John has moved out of it.'

Ella shook her head, and pointed to the next room. 'I cannot leave him,' she whispered.

'He will be as near you there as here, my darling. He is in heaven.'

'I know, I know—but——'

In the end, however, Ella was persuaded; on a promise being given her that she should see her father once more and bid him her last farewell, she suffered herself to be led up to Mrs. Wallace's apartment. It opened into a little sitting-room, where she could be alone or not as she pleased, but the companionship of such a kind friend—one who never spoke unless speech was desirable, and had a hundred ways of showing sympathy without officiousness—was an incalculable blessing to her. The world was no longer a solitude to her with Mrs. Wallace sitting beside her; and in the silent watches of the night, when Despair might otherwise have taken possession of her, it was driven away by the presence of the simple farmer's wife, as though she had been some guardian angel with flaming sword. On the second day, Mrs. Trant came up to see Ella, when she chanced to be alone.

'I would have come earlier, Miss, but that I feared to intrude,' she said; and she spoke truth. She was an honest, kindly woman, but she was a landlady. The death of a guest is

the very last thing—save the breaking out of an infectious disorder—which such persons wish to happen under their roof. In the case of the demise of the Hon. George Emilius Josceline, however, there were some mitigating circumstances: it looked well in the papers, and would advertise the hotel, and no doubt the family (represented by Ella) of such an illustrious individual would see that she suffered no pecuniary loss from the catastrophe. In the meantime, certain sad matters needed to be arranged, or rather, she required Miss Josceline's authority for the arrangement of them.

'There is a most respectable person, my dear young lady, at Lawton, accustomed to do all that is right and proper in these cases, and for the best families in the county, and you have only to say "Yes" to me, and everything shall be arranged without any trouble to you, and, you may be sure, to your satisfaction.'

'Do you mean about the—the—funeral?' gasped poor Ella.

'Yes, my dear young lady. Mr. Scarf is in the house now waiting for orders. Whether you wish your poor dear father to be carried to the family vault or not, I don't know, but——'

Ella shook her head. It was probable that her father's relatives would have closed it against him, as they had shut their doors against him when alive; and, in any case, it would not have been his wish, she knew, to lie there.

'Then of course he will be buried here; that is to say, at Barton: it's a beautiful graveyard, Miss,' said Mrs. Trant, consolingly, 'and as quiet as'—she was about to say 'the grave,' but her fine literary taste revolted against the tautology—'as quiet as any gentleman could wish, I am sure. You would like a simple funeral, no doubt?'

'Yes,' said Ella, speaking like one in a dream.

'If you desire it, Miss, Mr. Scarf bade me to say that he would furnish an estimate; but you would probably wish things, he thought, to be in accordance with the deceased's position.'

'I have not much money,' said Ella doubtfully; 'I hardly know what to say.'

Her position was pitiable indeed, for the five bank-notes the dead man had left in his desk were all she had in the world; and yet it seemed to her (as it seems to many wiser people who, under similar circumstances, are wont to lose their wits, to the great advantage of the undertaking fraternity) so shocking that she should interfere with any proposed arrangement to bury her father as became his rank.

'But what you have by you, Miss,' argued the landlady, 'is of no consequence, whether it be much or little. Mr. Scarf will give you any amount of credit.'

'You do not understand, Mrs. Trant; I am very poor,' said Ella frankly.

Of course Mrs. Trant did not understand; that people who came to stop at the *Ultramarine*, and in a carriage and four,

should be 'very poor,' was incomprehensible to her. If it was really so in this case, she was very sorry for the young lady ; but it was not without satisfaction that she reflected that the custom of the house was for visitors to settle their bills weekly, and that Mr. Josceline had just paid his little account.

'But have you no friends or relatives, Miss, who will be coming down to the funeral, and who will, of course, arrange——'

'No ; I have no friends,' said Ella firmly, almost defiantly. In some respects Mrs. Trant's visit had done her good : it had raised her from that condition of morbid melancholy in which death had plunged her, and compelled her to look life in the face.

'I am very sorry, my good young lady,' returned the landlady, her manner already grown more familiar from the knowledge of the financial position of her guest. 'I didn't mean to wound you, Heaven knows. I'll tell Mr. Scarf to be as economical as possible, consistent with what is due to your dear father's birth, and so on'—in which last words she privately included the reputation of the hotel.

At this moment Mrs. Wallace entered the room. There was something, perhaps, in the landlady's face—a certain lack of sympathy, or an expression which betrayed self-interest—which at once attracted her attention. 'What is the matter, Mrs. Trant?'

'Oh nothing, ma'am, I'm sure,' returned the other apologetically. 'I only came up to speak a few words to Miss Josceline about a matter of business.' And she signified by a sympathetic sigh what sort of business it was.

'Then you should not have spoken to her upon any such subject,' said Mrs. Wallace, with a severity little short of that which she had used to Mrs. Armytage. You remember what Dr. Cooper said.'

'Oh yes ; and likewise what was told me by your good husband and Mr. Aird. Miss Josceline' (and here she turned towards that young lady with a deprecatory smile) 'talks of having no friends, but I am sure she has plenty of 'em. "Don't let her be troubled," says one, "Leave everything to me," says another ; but still, I thought it best to have things done upon her own authority.'

'You thought quite right, Mrs. Trant,' said Ella, interposing, 'and did quite right, and I am much obliged to you.'

She appreciated the kindness of the good Doctor, and of Mr. Wallace, but from the assistance which it seemed had been proffered by Mr. Aird her soul revolted. That he had meant it as kindly as the rest she did not doubt ; but her father's dying words with respect to him had made any offer of service at his hands not only unwelcome, but absolutely hateful to her, and she felt grateful to Mrs. Trant for having rendered it ineffectual. 'Dear Mrs. Wallace,' she continued, when the landlady had gone, 'you must not treat me as your goodness, and gentleness, and consideration



suggest. It is not true kindness, though you mean it as such. It is like putting into a hot-house for a few days a plant which has to live in the open air.' Then she explained to her, in as few words as possible, what indeed she had already hinted to her before, her true position in the world, and the absolute hopelessness of its being bettered by any assistance from her family or otherwise. 'It is necessary,' she said, 'for me to make my own living, for as to what my poor father has left behind him, it will only enable me at most to start clear of debt.'

Mrs. Wallace's face exhibited not only grief and sympathy, but a certain shocked surprise, that to Ella's sensitive mind at once suggested blame of the dead man.

'I have had a happy girlhood,' she continued, 'and have nothing to complain of. Never had daughter a more loving father. To make a provision for my future was his ruling thought, as I have good cause to know; but opportunity was denied him; he had a tolerable income, but only, I believe, a life interest in it.'

Those words 'I believe' sounded very pitifully; they betrayed not only the girl's ignorance, but the simplicity which had prevented her from making inquiries into a subject so material to her welfare. Her well-meant apology for her father went, indeed, but a very little way with her companion; but Mrs. Wallace was one of that small minority who, instead of indulging their virtuous indignation against evildoers, devote themselves to remedy the evil.

'My dear Ella,' she said, 'what you say is very sad and very serious, but I need not tell you that there are worse losses in this world than the loss of money. Matters of business must be looked to, of course, but under present circumstances I don't think it is right you should be troubled with pounds, shillings, and pence, and I hope you will let me be your Chancellor of the Exchequer. We are thrifty folk in Devon, and you will not find me wasteful nor extravagant; and I think I know what you would wish.'

With heartfelt thanks Ella accepted this kind proposal, for, to say the truth, the prospect of a personal interview with Mr. Scarf sent a shiver through her. It is not every one, however sensible in other respects, who has the toughness of fibre for such things. For example, in the case of most persons, I am sure that the desire of 'seeing the last,' as it is called, of their lost dear ones, after 'life and thought have gone away' from the empty house, is a grievous error. 'The rapture of repose' of which the poet sings may be in the dead man's face, but it is not always there; and even if it be, it is not the expression which is familiar to us, and only too often effaces for ever the beloved lineaments to which we have been accustomed. In Mr. Josceline's case, he looked in death, as Mrs. Trant described it (honestly enough, though the knowledge that his bill had been settled might have added a

seraphic touch or two), 'like an angel.' The calmness which the features had always worn was there, and the smile—but with an inexplicable difference. Every one said who saw him that it spoke of heaven, but nevertheless (or perhaps, as the cynical would have said, for that very reason) it did not speak of *him*. There was nothing to shock her, but Ella secretly regretted that her pious desire to wish him that last good-bye had been gratified. And somehow in consequence she afterwards felt a greater relief than she otherwise would have done in 'all the arrangements' having been left in Mrs. Wallace's hands. In relieving her of that melancholy duty, however, that lady had no intention of giving her young friend leisure and opportunity to indulge in fruitless grief: her own recent experience of bereavement had taught her that the best remedy for the torn and tender heart is occupation of the mind.

'Since you tell me, my darling, that your dear father's latest thoughts were occupied with your future,' she said, 'it can be no unkindness or disrespect to him—but the reverse—to think of the same thing. It must be done sooner or later, and the longer you put it off (because your decision, in that case, must needs be more or less hurried) the more difficult you will find it to come to any conclusion.'

Mrs. Wallace spoke very slowly, because it was not an easy matter with her to express her ideas, and with a certain gentle earnestness that went home to the young girl's heart, at least as much as the logic of her argument. Ella's reply was but a pressure of the hand, but it encouraged her to proceed.

'Now are you quite sure, my dear, to begin with, that you have really no relative to take an interest in you? It seems incredible, being what you are, that this should be so.'

'Nevertheless, dear Mrs. Wallace, it is so,' answered Ella, calmly. 'My father had relatives, but they have ill-treated him, and I would rather beg my bread of the world at large than be indebted to them for a crust.'

It was on the lips of Mrs. Wallace to say, 'Have you no relatives by the mother's side?' but something restrained her. It had not escaped her notice that Ella had never spoken of her mother.

'Well, that clears the ground for us at once,' she answered cheerfully. 'My husband has a great idea of people sticking to their own "kith and kin;" but if they decline to stick, they are not postage-stamps, that you can make them do it. When one has no relatives—or as good as none—it is clear one must turn to one's friends.'

'I have no friend in the world but my old schoolmistress,' replied Ella, simply. 'It was to her I was thinking of writing. I am very ignorant, but I understand French, and perhaps, if I could get some lessons, I could learn to draw sufficiently well to teach quite little girls.'

Mrs. Wallace shook her head.

'I was afraid I was overrating my powers,' sighed Ella, 'but in time, perhaps——'

'I didn't mean that,' interposed her companion, quickly. 'Why, you draw beautifully already, I am sure; and as to French, though I know nothing about it, I heard Mr. Felspar (who has lived in foreign parts) say you talk like a native. But, bless you, my pretty dear, you would never do for a schoolmistress.'

'Why not?'

'Well, for one thing—though there are hosts of other objections—the English master, and the French master, and the music master, and all the masters, would all be falling in love with you; and that, you may depend upon it, the schoolmistress wouldn't like. Seriously, such a line of life would be very unsuited to you, my dear, and I am sure very distasteful.'

Ella shook her head with a sad smile, as though she would have said, 'Beggars cannot be choosers.'

'When you said you had no friends, Ella,' continued Mrs. Wallace after a little pause, 'I hope you intend to make the reservation, "except those I have made under this roof."'

'Where I have been three or four weeks at most,' interrupted Ella gently.

'Time has nothing to do with making friends, though it has everything to do with *trying* them, my dear. I shall not pay myself the bad compliment of supposing you include me among your mere acquaintances. Being a young lady of good manners, you meant of course to except the present company.'

'I am sure, dear Mrs. Wallace,' said Ella hesitatingly, 'that you are everything that is good and kind; but——'

'Now don't spoil such a pretty speech with "buts,"' interposed her companion. 'I hope, indeed, I intend to be of service to you; but I confess that selfishness enters largely into the proposition I am about to make, and which (though, since you know him, it is hardly worth while to put that in) will, I know, have my husband's approbation. We have lately, as you know, experienced a sad loss; the death of our niece has made our return home painful to both of us. She was of the same age as yourself, or nearly so, and of such a similar nature that John has often said to me, "Does not Miss Josceline remind you of our darling?" Will you oblige us, my dear, by returning with us to Devonshire, and taking her dear place there, and in both our hearts? Stop a bit. Of course there are many objections; it is not, I know, the sort of life to which you have been accustomed; nor are we the sort of people. If any relatives of your own were half as willing and eager to receive you as we are, we should feel that they had an indisputable claim to you; but, being free to choose a home for yourself, why not choose ours? At all events, let us persuade you to try it. Just at present society would not be

to your taste. The very simplicity of our mode of life would, I think, be agreeable to you.' Then, seeing a strange look in her companion's face, she added, 'You are not offended, my dear?'

'Hush! hush!' exclaimed Ella, throwing her arms about the kind old lady. 'When you talk like that I begin to doubt more than ever whether what you have said can be real; whether such good and kind people as you and your husband can actually exist. If I don't answer as I should—if I don't thank you as I ought—it is because your goodness and generosity overwhelm me.'

'Now, that is a mistake, my dear,' observed Mrs. Wallace gravely; 'our motives, as I have already said, are selfish. We want you—I heard Professor Armytage use the very term the other day, so I'm sure it's right—to supply a void. It's quite possible you mayn't like it: you may find Foracre Farm intolerably dull; but "all we ask," as the advertisers of cheap goods say, is, "Give us a trial." Now I look on that much, at least, as settled.'

If there had been time, or opportunity, to have summed up all the thoughts in her heart, Ella might no doubt have found objections to Mrs. Wallace's generous proposition. For one thing, it seemed terrible to her, just at present, to remove herself so far from the dear remains of him she had lost. It seemed a sort of desertion of him to leave him lying in his lonely grave, and to depart so far away. Again, though this had far less weight with her, she felt that at the Devonshire farmhouse she would of necessity be cut off from all sources of instruction in that art by the pursuit of which she had fondly hoped to gain her bread. But these things, even if they had occurred to her at the moment—which they did not—would have been swept away in the strong tide of gratitude that filled her bosom. But an hour ago the whole world seemed to have been closed against her—she had pictured herself wandering round its iron walls without hope of a loophole; and now, not only had a door been opened to her, but from it there had looked forth a face of unmistakable love and welcome. She did not contemplate being a lifelong burden upon her new-found friends—her independent spirit would have revolted against that; but she appreciated and was deeply grateful for the opportunity thus offered to her of 'looking about her,' of turning over in her mind at her leisure some course of conduct for the future. Like some drowning wretch unexpectedly cast upon some hospitable shore, instead of being left to struggle with the waves and be dashed against the rocks, she had only to be thankful.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## A CHARITABLE COMMITTEE.

OF all the pleasures of the exercise of charity, the very greatest (to some minds), though it is not generally mentioned among the attributes of that divine gift, is the satisfaction afforded by the fact of the recipient of our bounty having once occupied a social position equal or superior to our own. This is the *ne plus ultra* of the delights of patronage, and makes the actions of the just smell sweet (in their own nostrils) indeed. The sensation of heaping coals of fire on an enemy may be pleasant and comfortable, but the experience of which I speak confers a happiness infinitely beyond it, a self-complacency of the soul.

On the day before that fixed for the interment of Mr. Josceline, and when all that Mrs. Armytage had advanced against that gentleman had been fully corroborated (in the view of her late audience, at least) by Ella's confession of poverty made to Mrs. Trant, a meeting of the guests in the *Ultramarine* was held in the ladies' drawing-room to take that young person's sad case into consideration, and to concert measures for her immediate relief.

The company were convened by circular, issued by Mrs. Armytage, which as a literary composition had afforded her as much satisfaction as was compatible with the melancholy circumstances of its origin—and even more. She had shown it to the Professor himself, and inquired whether it needed any addition. He had replied 'Most certainly not,' in a tone of the most genuine conviction. This benevolent lady's appeal had been responded to; and the company at the *Ultramarine* had 'rallied round her' (to borrow a phrase from the circular) with a unanimity even beyond her expectations.

Not only did all the lady-guests put in an appearance (except Mrs. Wallace, of whom, as Mrs. Armytage observed, 'much delicacy of social feeling could hardly be expected,' and who remained abovestairs with Ella), but all the gentlemen. This latter circumstance, however, in no way abashed the Professor's wife: the fact of the assemblage being held in the ladies' drawing-room made it, as she observed, a woman's question, and she would, therefore, make no apology for taking the chair. Mr. Aird, with little Davey by his side, looking more fragile and delicate than ever, no less from his recent illness than from his present sorrow on Ella's account, was the only one who even ventured to point out the desirability of her being voted into it. 'On an occasion of this kind, sir,' she had observed reprovingly, 'cold formalities may, I think, be dispensed with.'



‘Very good, madam, I hope they will be,’ was his quiet reply. She did not understand the cynicism of his remark, but she felt him to be an incongruous element in her scheme of benevolence; just as a spirit-rapper objects to the individual who is ‘not *en rapport* with supernatural manifestations,’—the doubter.

When Mrs. Armytage rose from her seat with a manuscript in her hand (for she was not going to spoil the effect of her carefully composed speech by its *vivâ voce* delivery, in which something might have been forgotten), and all the company had arranged themselves with serious faces before her in a semicircle, the scene was really an imposing one.

As Mr. Percival-Lott whispered to his wife, ‘It’s like hearing the reading of a will by a blessed female attorney!’

Every one assumed an attitude of rapt attention, including the Professor, who however was secretly occupied with the investigation of a fine specimen (captured that very morning) of the stag beetle, which he held in the hollow of his hand, and regarded with a tender solemnity, very appropriate for the occasion; he had already heard his wife’s ‘appeal to the charitable’ three times, so that any diversion of his mind could hardly be called inexcusable. The appeal, however admirable as a literary composition, was a little long, so we will ‘take it as read,’ after the excellent example of wise princes when addresses are presented to them. Let it suffice to say that it set forth, with considerable unction, how Miss Ella Josceline had been nursed in the lap of luxury—a luxury, alas! that had been anything but warranted by her circumstances—and was now dependent upon charity for her daily bread; and that it ended with an application for subscriptions. ‘For my own part,’ said Mrs. Armytage, in conclusion, ‘speaking for myself and the Professor, we feel that money in such a case is but of small service in comparison with a permanent provision for the future, which it is my intention to offer to the young lady under my own roof.’

Here there were almost universal signs of approbation. It was felt to be an immense relief by everybody, that the responsibility of providing something—permanent or otherwise—for Miss Josceline was removed from their own shoulders; and in their satisfaction they almost forgave Mrs. Armytage for having called them together, as it seemed, to bear witness to her own benevolence. For once the feeling of the company was with her (since the interruption might have induced a change in her good intentions) when Mr. Aird, in his driest manner, begged to inquire of Mrs. Armytage whether the details of her scheme of providence were a dead secret, or whether she would mind revealing the nature of that permanent provision for Miss Ella Josceline which she had in her mind. The inquiry from such a mouth was an embarrassing one; though Mrs. Armytage had really spoken what, for a person of her type of character, might have been termed the truth. The term ‘permanent provision’ was a euphemism for the offer of the

post of companion to herself. Her imagination was flattered by the idea of having a grand-daughter of the Earl of Boroughby in a state of dependency; and she had persuaded herself that something of the sort was demanded by her position in society, and by what she was accustomed to call her 'needs.' She had even rehearsed the little speech in which she proposed to break this dazzling prospect to Ella herself.

'I shall repose the greatest confidence in you, my dear girl, which one human being can entrust to another,' was one of its sentences, which, when it came 'to be fried,' meant that she should delegate to her the duties of combing Fido and cutting her canary's claws. But of course she could not explain this to Mr. Aird.

'Indeed, sir,' she said, 'I must claim to keep my own counsel in matters relative to my own affairs.'

'Very good,' replied Mr. Aird. 'Only if you are going to provide for the young lady in so munificent a fashion, why send for us?'

There was a murmur of approbation. Every one felt that since Mrs. Armytage was playing the part of Lady Bountiful, it was better that she should go through with it. To ask for subscriptions from other people was to spoil a ship for a pound of tar.

'I thought I had explained,' said Mrs. Armytage with frigidity, 'that the young lady in question is almost destitute. My proposal is that we should all help to start her in life. The rest—supposing she accepts my offer, which I conclude may be taken for granted—may be left to me. But since I have taken that responsibility on my shoulders, it will hardly be expected that I should give anything more than a very moderate sum towards her immediate expenses. The Professor and I have agreed that, under the circumstances, a five-pound note——'

'Ten,' interrupted the Professor, looking up for one instant from his entomological studies.

'I think we said five, my dear.'

'I said ten,' repeated the Professor, 'and I shall give ten.'

Mrs. Armytage flashed a glance at her husband, calculated to shrivel him. But he was stroking a wing of his beetle, and consequently unconscious of it.

'Very good,' she said—they were words full of significance—'*very good*; ten pounds.'

'And very handsome of you, I'm sure,' said Mrs. Jennynge. Her anger against the dead man, who, from recent revelations, stood convicted in her mind of the design—which indeed he had entertained—of obtaining a large slice of her property, burnt fiercely within her, and extended to his innocent daughter. Moreover, she was by nature desperately averse to part with that the possession of which she was secretly aware alone made her palatable to her fellow-creatures, her money.

'It is true, Mrs. Armytage,' she continued, 'that your acquaintance with the late Mr. Josceline, as you used often to tell

us, was much closer than that of the rest of us, and his daughter has therefore a peculiar claim upon you. Nevertheless, I repeat that your proposed subscription does great credit to your liberality. It had passed through my own mind to offer the young lady some such position as it seems you yourself have already decided upon. I thought she might have made herself useful as a companion to my own Anastasia; but it is perhaps best as it is. To one who undertakes any such employment, a superfluity of means is obviously incongruous; and it seems to me that the sum proposed is amply sufficient. I hope, however, I am not one to turn a deaf ear to the sacred calls of charity. You may put my name down, ma'am, for five guineas.'

While Mrs. Armytage was entering this munificent donation on a sheet of paper she had provided for that purpose, calculated by its dimensions for the entry of a million of money, Mr. Percival-Lott whispered to his wife, 'I am really afraid that poor girl will be very miserable with Mrs. Armytage; if you would like to have such a person about you, my dear—when I am obliged to be away from you—I shouldn't mind her salary.'

The suspected bride gave him a look that froze all further utterance: I am afraid that she deemed that phrase, 'when I am obliged to be away from you,' a perfect masterpiece of audacious duplicity. She did not deign to answer him, but observed quietly to Mrs. Armytage, 'And I also will give five guineas.'

'That is 20*l.* 10*s.*,' remarked that lady, looking round her like an auctioneer in expectation of a bid. Her indignation against her husband had passed away; she was not sorry, upon the whole, that her offer had been more generous than that of the other two ladies. It struck her, however, that she was at present responsible for the extra subscriptions, and that Mrs. Jennynge, in particular, might be more ready with her promise than her performance. 'I think the money had better be paid at once,' she said, 'in order to save confusion.'

The Professor and Mr. Percival-Lott produced their respective subscriptions with much alacrity, but the manner in which Mrs. Jennynge fumbled with the contents of her purse caused Mrs. Armytage to congratulate herself upon her caution; every pound seemed to cost her a drop of blood, and the parting with her very shillings to be analogous to having five of her hairs pulled separately out by the roots.

'And now, Mr. Wallace, what are *you* going to give us?' inquired Mrs. Armytage cheerfully, and with a look round at her audience as though something humorously vulgar was going to happen, such as the production of a half-crown in coppers.

'Well, madam, I hardly know,' hesitated the farmer. What he meant was that the whole affair had failed to recommend itself to him, and that he should like to have counsel's opinion before committing himself to it.

'Hardly know!' echoed Mrs. Armytage sharply. 'You must

surely know whether you mean to give five pounds or five shillings.'

'It is not that, ma'am,' returned Mr. Wallace, scratching his head confusedly. 'The fact is, I must ask my wife.'

'A very wise thing to do,' said Mrs. Armytage, with marked approval. 'We will put your subscription last—last but not least, I hope we shall be able to say, when Mrs. Wallace has fixed the figure. Now, Mr. Aird, what shall I put your name down for? I am sure you will not be backward where everybody else has behaved with—well, I may say with such surprising liberality.'

'Quite the right term, I'm sure, for it,' said Mr. Aird with a dry cough. 'Well, I have not quite made up my mind, but I'll give something; let me know before you send in the list, only mind there must be no name mentioned.'

'But why should not Miss Josceline know,' inquired Mrs. Armytage, conscious of her superior donation, 'to which of her kind friends she is relatively indebted for assistance?'

'Because it would be painful to her, madam, and increase her sense of personal obligation.'

'There,' said Mrs. Jennynge, very willing that her five guineas should make the same appearance in the eyes of the recipient as Mrs. Armytage's ten pounds, 'I quite agree with Mr. Aird.'

'So do I,' said Mrs. Lott. 'The making the subscriptions anonymous renders it so much more delicate.'

'Just as you like,' replied Mrs. Armytage with indifference. On reflection, she perceived that nothing would be easier than to convey to her future 'companion' the fact that her subscription had been the largest. 'I am sure I am the last person to wish to appear ostentatious. But you see we are collecting the money, Mr. Aird. Is it that you have no notes or gold about you?'

Mr. Aird nodded assent. 'I'll write you a cheque,' he said.

'A cheque can hardly be drawn for such a purpose for less than five pounds,' observed Mrs. Armytage persuasively.

'You may calculate on that amount, madam,' answered the other quietly.

Whereupon, Mrs. Armytage smiled a gracious smile. Of the performance of any promise of Mr. Aird's she had no doubt, and upon the whole she felt that he had behaved with unexpected docility. 'Putting down Mr. Aird's contribution at five pounds, at least, ladies and gentlemen,' observed the Chair, with modest self-obliteration, 'we have now collected no less than 25*l.* 10*s.*, upon which I think you may well congratulate yourselves, as well as the fortunate recipient of your bounty. I will make it my business to inform her at once of the result of this, I may say, most successful meeting. It is probable that the expenses incident to the melancholy event that is to take place to-morrow may be weighing on her mind, and it may be a relief to her——'

'No.'



The monosyllable was uttered by Mr. Aird, and in a voice so confident and authoritative that it had the effect of a full stop upon Mrs. Armytage's eloquence. It produced, indeed, a total silence, during which Mr. Aird coolly entered into a whispered conversation with his neighbour, Mr. Wallace, who presently, to the great astonishment of the company, thus addressed it:

'I beg pardon, gentlemen and ladies, but I have it from my wife, who is in close attendance on Miss Josceline, that that young lady is at present not in a condition to discuss business affairs, or to receive a visit from any person. With your permission, I will inform my wife of what has occurred, and she will herself communicate your kind intentions to Miss Josceline.'

'Intentions!' ejaculated Mrs. Armytage, pointing to the little heap of notes and gold. 'I should say those were something more than intentions.'

'Very good, let us say "effects,"' observed Mr. Aird drily. 'What Mr. Wallace has remarked, however, seems to me conclusive. Any visit to Miss Josceline at present would be obviously an intrusion; whereas, through an intimate friend, such as she has now with her, the communication which we are considering can be conveyed to her without offence.'

Mrs. Armytage did not reply in words, but she sniffed audibly. A sniff from such a woman is like a shake of the head from a physician, full of significance. What it meant on this occasion was that all this delicate consideration for the feelings of an impecunious young person was deplorable and out of place. At the best, it was but delaying the evil day in store for her. At the worst, it was leading her still further into that fool's paradise in which her father's bringing up had placed her, and rendering her more unfit than ever for the occupation that was about to be so mercifully put in her way by Providence and Mrs. Armytage.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### DECLINED WITH THANKS.

I SUPPOSE it is by providential arrangement, in order to prevent our being got rid of by unfair means, that there is so great a difficulty in disposing of the remains of our poor humanity after death, but it is certainly a most prolonged and distressing affair. Day after day, so long as the tenantless clay is above ground, the house is plunged in gloom, and made to assimilate itself by its blinded windows to the thing it holds. An abject terror, begotten by the object that, when in life, was dearest to them, takes possession of the more youthful or imaginative members of the household, and becomes for them the last and most abiding memento of him. Surely it would be better when he has fled that made



him dear to us, that he should be removed at once to some edifice designed for that purpose, there to await the day of interment. And what a day of vain barbaric display and of cruel wasteful cost that too often is! It seems so hard to the survivors, however it may impoverish them, to grudge their lost one aught that may seem to show respect and reverence; and hence there are nodding plumes and prancing steeds, more befitting the advertisement of a travelling circus than to be the accompaniment of Christian burial. Mr. Scarf was not a bad specimen of his kind, and with sensible Dr. Cooper to insist on moderation in his professional display of grief, there was less to find fault with than usual; but it was not to be expected—‘it would not be barely decent,’ said the undertaker, ‘to perform the matter otherwise’—that the brother of an earl should be taken to his last home without mutes and feathers; so that poor Ella, in addition to the natural horrors of the scene, had to face that paraphernalia by which those who have been ‘rich in this world’s goods’ are wont (as if in symbol of the terrors awaiting them) to have their death made hideous.

She left the hotel, leaning on good Mrs. Wallace’s arm, and stepped with her into the single mourning coach; her presence, though it was only indicated by an occasional pressure of the hand, was an inexpressible comfort to her, and, without it, it seemed to the poor, orphaned, lonely girl that she could never have survived the ordeal. No words of the awful service for the dead escaped her, yet somehow, greatly to her distress, it seemed to lack appropriateness. There had been little—to speak plainly, there had been nothing—in all the dead man’s life to associate it with that which was to come; no word had been dropped from his lips concerning it; his thoughts had been of the world, and of no future, save her own, to the very last. What comfort she experienced arose from the beauty and solitude of the churchyard itself, which impressed themselves upon her, notwithstanding that her eyes were riveted throughout upon that which she was to behold no more. She was conscious, however, of a large concourse of spectators, who kept reverent silence, and of a bird that held its song throughout the closing scene and mingled its last notes with the falling mould. She noticed, too, that the coffin was covered with fresh flowers, and on the journey home inquired of her companion who had sent them. ‘Not that I need ask,’ she said, with trembling gratitude.

‘Nay, darling, it was not I,’ answered Mrs. Wallace; ‘they were sent from Clover Cottage.’

Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon had been present, as were all the guests of the hotel, Mrs. Wallace informed her.

‘That was kind indeed,’ said Ella.

As such matters seemed to interest her, and in order to divert her thoughts, her companion went on to say, ‘And I think you must have at least one friend more than you wot of, my dear; or if not, she must have been a most tender-hearted woman, for I

never saw one more moved with pity for another. It was some lady from the Castle; a Miss Burt, they tell me.'

'I never heard of her,' said Ella, not indifferently, but in that mechanical tone in which we speak when our thoughts are far from our words.

'I am sure she must have heard of *you*,' persisted Mrs. Wallace. 'It was not, I noticed, upon your poor father's grave, but upon yourself, as you stood beside it, that her eyes were fixed. She had a thick veil on, yet I saw enough of her face to note it was a kind one, independently of the sympathy it showed for you.'

Ella answered nothing; she had sunk back in her seat, and, with closed eyes, was recalling the beautiful spot in which her father had been laid. It was a very home of rest and peace, carpeted with grass and flowers, and canopied by 'immemorial elms.' Save when the voice of prayer arose from it, the silence was unbroken, except for the dreamy caw of the rooks, or (when the wind was from the south) for the far-off murmur of the sea. It seemed to her that if she had still a wish in life, it was to dwell there. But save for the vicarage, which, half hidden in a network of greenery, nestled beside the church, there was no other dwelling-place near it, with one exception. The most unambitious cottage would have been out of proportion to her humble fortunes, and that exception was comparatively a palace. The churchyard was shut in on every side save one, where a vista had been cut through the trees, disclosing Barton Castle.

'I noticed,' continued Mrs. Wallace, pursuing her well-meant efforts to rouse Ella's attention—and, as it happened, chiming in with her present thought—'that the flag on the Castle was half-mast high.'

'Indeed,' sighed Ella; 'then I fear I have some fellow-sufferer.'

'Not so; it was lowered, I am assured, in respect for the occasion. Mr. Edwards may be a recluse, but such an act shows at least he has some reverent feelings.'

Ella nodded in wearisome assent. If the incident had happened in the case of another, it would undoubtedly have interested her; but the sense of loss was too new and keen to admit of other topics of thought.

'It seems so cruel, dear Mrs. Wallace,' she whispered, 'to leave him.'

'Yes; that is what one always feels. For all that, my darling, you will be better for getting away.'

Poor Ella was not thinking of herself at all. All her ideas—as happens to many of us under the same sad circumstances—were in a state of inversion. She was thinking of doing living service to him who had passed out of all such possibilities, and forgetting the personal needs that were about to be so urgent. When they reached the hotel and were in their own room, or rather in that of

Mrs. Wallace, Ella suddenly inquired of her, 'When are you thinking of going to Devonshire?'

As a matter of fact, though Ella had forgotten it, the day for their departure had been fixed, and at the time she had offered no objection.

'Well, my dear, we did say to-morrow, you know,' hesitated her kind companion; 'but I am sure if you wish to stop on longer, William will make other arrangements.'

Ella shook her head. If she was to go—and it was clear it was to be—to leave him lying alone there to-morrow was no worse than to do so a week hence.

'I am very weak and foolish, dear Mrs. Wallace,' she said, after a little pause; 'but you must forgive me, for it is your great kindness that gives me the opportunity of weakness. But for you I should be making my bread by this time, or rather attempting to do so. There are things too that ought to be looked to at once. Your good husband has taken them in charge, I know, but——'

'Hush, hush, dear, we will talk of that another time.'

Ella was referring, as the other knew, to the expenses of the funeral.

'But if you really wish,' continued the kind old lady, 'to give your mind to business, something has occurred here. I hardly know how to speak of it, but I am sure you will not be offended with me.'

'Offended with you! I should as soon think of being angry with Providence.'

'That's just what I said to William!' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace, with precipitate adhesion. '"I am sure the dear girl has confidence in me, therefore let *me* speak to her about the matter, and nobody else; she will know that I mean no harm."'

'I know you mean nothing but good,' said Ella gently; 'my good and every one else's.'

'Well, let us suppose what I have got to tell you about, my dear, was undertaken only for your good: some think it was from mere vanity and ostentation; and certainly the fact of Mrs. Armytage being the prime mover in it is not an assuring circumstance.'

'Mrs. Armytage! What can Mrs. Armytage have to do with me?'

'Well, it was this way. When you told Mrs. Trant the other day that you were not well off, she did not keep the matter to herself, as she should have done, and of course people were very sorry; and there was a meeting in the ladies' drawing-room, by Mrs. Armytage, and everybody was there except me, my dear. And here's the subscription list,' added Mrs. Wallace, with nervous abruptness, producing a roll of paper.

For the moment Ella's pale cheeks became rosy red, as though some hand had smitten them. The thought that her father's daughter should so soon have become an object of public charity was indeed a bitter one. Though she held the paper opened before

her, she could not read it, because of the tears of mortification that sprang to her eyes. If absolute strangers had done this, it would have seemed less degrading; but that acquaintances—mere acquaintances, who could never have been her friends, but who, up to within the last few days, were her equals—should have taken it in hand to give her pecuniary assistance was a humiliation indeed. With an effort, however, she recovered herself; after all, she reflected, the offer, as Mrs. Wallace had endeavoured to convince her, was doubtless a well-intentioned one; and she was no beggar, for she had asked nothing of them, nor had she the least intention of accepting their bounty.

‘I was afraid you would not like it, my dear child, but there was no choice but to let you know of it. And it was better that the thing should come through me than through any one else. My husband, acting under my advice, did not put down his name for anything; indeed, nobody put down their names, and—as it seems to me—for a very good reason; of course you will not accept it.’

‘I shall certainly not accept it, my dear Mrs. Wallace,’ said Ella, with cheerful distinctness; ‘but, at the same time, I am astounded as well as deeply touched at the very great kindness and generosity that has been displayed to me.’

‘Well, that is what I call being thankful for small mercies, my dear. Why, the whole thing comes to what?—a matter of twenty-five pounds, is it not?’

‘Twenty-five pounds! My dear Mrs. Wallace, it is a thousand and twenty-five pounds. Listen:

“*At a meeting of some friends of Miss Ella Josceline, held in the ladies’ drawing-room at the ‘Ultramarine,’ the sum of 1,025l. 10s. was collected on her behalf, and will be paid over to her in any manner she may please to direct.*”’

‘Lor, my dear, let me look at it. William said it was a beggarly subscription to which he should be ashamed to put his name.’

‘But there are no names at all,’ observed Ella.

‘No, that was settled. You were not to know, William said, who gave you twopence and who gave you threepence. Let me look at the handwriting: it’s Dr. Cooper’s, I’ll take my affidavit, because it’s so like his prescriptions. And here is Dr. Cooper coming up the road.’

The Doctor, who had visited Ella semi-professionally every day since her father’s death, had in fact called to see how she found herself after the ordeal of the morning.

After a few words of sympathetic greeting to his young friend and patient, he began at once upon the subject which had just been occupying the attention of the two ladies.

‘I conclude, Mrs. Wallace, that you have made that little communication known to Miss Ella with which I entrusted you?’

‘Yes, I have, Doctor.’



'Very good. And she accepts her friends' gift, no doubt, in the same kindly spirit in which it is offered her—one from which I do assure her all sense of obligation is absent, and—now don't cry, Miss Ella—it was particularly hoped by the donors that you should not be distressed—the word used was "upset," I remember; but the terms are synonymous—by this expression of their goodwill.'

'I can't help crying, Doctor, and it does me good,' said Ella. 'Such tears give me no pain, I assure you; it makes me almost happy to think that there is such generosity in the world, even towards such an unworthy object as myself. I cannot accept this munificent gift, but from the bottom of my heart I appreciate it.'

'Cannot accept it! Why not? I say again you are putting yourself under no obligation. The whole affair has been explained to me in detail; and the great point is, that I am not to tell you one bit of it. You are never to know who gives the money, and therefore you can never be made uncomfortable by receiving it; you are to take it as though it dropped from the clouds.'

'Just so,' assented Mrs. Wallace. 'A thousand and twenty-five pounds ten shillings have dropped from heaven, and it would be a most wicked thing if you didn't pick it up.'

Ella shook her head; her face had suddenly become very grave. 'I could in no case accept it, Dr. Cooper,' she said stedfastly; 'but, in replying to that effect, I should like to know the names of those to whom I am, all the same, so greatly indebted. An acknowledgment of their proposed kindness is the least they can expect. It is dreadful to speak of such matters in a calculating and comparative manner; but from what Mrs. Wallace has said to me, I cannot but think that the great bulk of this munificence proceeds from one individual.'

'That is quite true; and why not? It comes from an anonymous donor—one who especially laid it upon me that he, or she (for I am not going to tell you even the sex), should remain anonymous. What is your objection to that? No one but myself knows who he, or she, is, or ever will know. The whole of the money is in my hands, awaiting your directions.'

'Then it must be given back again,' said Ella firmly.

She felt as certain as though she had seen his cheque that Mr. Aird had added a thousand pounds to the contributions of the other subscribers; and from his hand, least of all, she was resolved never to accept a shilling. It was quite probable that nothing but his own generosity and pity for her sad condition had suggested such a princely gift; but her father's dying words, 'I wish you to marry Mr. Aird,' still rang in her ears, and made another construction of that gentleman's conduct possible.

'Am I really to understand, my dear young lady,' inquired the Doctor with grim concern, 'that you positively refuse what is, in fact, a maintenance, though not a competence, for life? Are you aware how hard it is for all of us, worst of all for one of your sex,



and especially one brought up as you have been, to gain a livelihood? And, above all, have I made it quite plain to you that the money is offered in all delicacy and consideration, without proviso or drawback of any kind, such as the most sensitive mind need shrink from?’

‘Indeed, dear Dr. Cooper, I understand all that,’ said Ella earnestly. ‘It is impossible for any one to have behaved more generously—more graciously—than the person of whom I speak. But when you tell him that my rejection of his munificence proceeds from a sense of right and duty—not of pride—I am sure, if I know his character, he will feel neither hurt nor offended.’

‘He will not feel that, Miss Ella,’ replied the Doctor gently; ‘but he will certainly deeply regret (as I do) the course you have thought proper to take. Mr. Aird, for since his attempt at remaining anonymous has failed (through no fault of mine, as you will bear me witness), further concealment of his identity is absurd—Mr. Aird, I say, feels a very deep and genuine interest in you, while your behaviour to his child has laid him under a deep sense of obligation. It was little Davey’s hand (as if to excuse his father’s offer of pecuniary assistance to you) which brought me the cheque, which the donor hoped would pass unrecognised in the grand total of the general benevolence.’

‘Tell him—tell Mr. Aird from me,’ said Ella, deeply moved, ‘that I estimate the consideration with which this noble offer has been made as highly as the offer itself.’

‘But, my dear young lady, will you not tell him so yourself? You will surely wish him and little Davey good-bye. When Mr. Aird learnt that Mrs. Wallace had offered you a home, his gratification at the fact was heightened, as he himself told me, by the thought that you would be with common friends, so that he should not—as he expressed it—lose sight of you. Indeed, I think,’ added the Doctor, turning to Mrs. Wallace, ‘he promised to pay you a visit in Devonshire.’

‘Certainly he did,’ responded the lady addressed; ‘and I am looking forward to us four all being together there, just as we were in the Prior’s Hostel, only, please God, in good health.’

This news sent a thrill of something like horror through Ella. The idea of Mr. Aird’s wanting to marry her was one that, but for her father’s words, would never have entered into her dreams. If it had been suggested to her by any other human being save him alone, it would only have evoked her laughter; nor did she even now believe in the probability of it. But somehow it had since become in her eyes a possible contingency; and at all events, which was almost as distressing to her, there was the consciousness of what her father had intended, always associated with Mr. Aird, and this made his presence intolerable to her. His present munificence—though she acquitted him of any other motive for it save a generous impulse—increased this feeling of repugnance; she almost felt (like one who has entered into a plot

against his benefactor) remorseful and ashamed at every token of his goodwill.

'I cannot see Mr. Aird,' said she, sadly but firmly. 'I am not equal to it, Doctor; I am not, indeed. I will see little Davey, of course, before I go; but as to his father, pray spare me. I have had of late too much of farewells.'

The Doctor looked at her with a puzzled air, which seemed to say, 'Now this surprises me in so sensible a young woman.' He replied, however, 'Just as you please, Miss Ella. You shall see nobody you don't like: my medical veto will protect you from all intrusion. Your resolve, however, will disappoint some kind friends. I must say for those two young gentlemen at Clover Cottage, since they will have no opportunity of saying it for themselves, that their sorrow for your sad case is sincere indeed. If their going barefoot to Barton and back to-day would have given you the least comfort, they would, I am sure they would, have done it cheerfully.'

'I believe it—I—oh, thank them for me, Dr. Cooper,' cried Ella, breaking down for the first time, and sobbing as though her heart would break. 'I was wicked and ungrateful indeed when I called myself friendless, since you and they, not to mention my best of friends here,' and she laid her hand caressingly on Mrs. Wallace's shoulder, 'have treated me with a kindness far beyond my deserts.'

'There we all differ from you,' said the Doctor, confidently. 'The general impression, and at Clover Cottage particularly, is that Fate has treated you very hardly. However, there are brighter days in store for you, and I trust I shall live to see them before I sing my *Nunc Dimittis*. You entrust me, then, as I understand, with all your "good-byes"?''

'If you will be so very good, Doctor, as to undertake them, yes; but I must, of course, acknowledge in writing the kind intentions of these good people,' here she pointed to the subscription list, 'independently, that is, of Mr. Aird.'

'Not a bit of it,' exclaimed the Doctor, sharply. 'I'll just tell them that you "decline with thanks." It is not true kindness that dictates their sort of benevolence. We were in two minds, Mr. Aird and I, that is, whether we should ever let you hear of it; only he thought it might be the means of affording you material assistance without laying you under what you might mistake for a personal obligation. No, no; you shall not write a line. They would frame and glaze your acknowledgment of their trumpery offer, and boast of the favour they had done the grand-daughter of the Earl of Boroughby as long as they lived. It's like publishing a book by subscription; by which, for every *bonâ fide* purchaser, you are saddled with fifty patrons at five shillings a head.'

'But they must not think me ungracious, Doctor,' pleaded Ella, smiling at the other's vehemence.

‘If they do, it will be their own fault, my dear Miss Ella. I’ll be as polite’—he was about to say ‘as your dear father,’ but stopped himself just in time, and added ‘as a Frenchman,’ instead.

Here there was a knock at the door. ‘Now, if that’s Mrs. Armytage,’ muttered the Doctor, ‘sooner than let her come in and patronise this unhappy girl I’ll throw the woman downstairs.’

It was not, however, Mrs. Armytage, but Mrs. Trant, with a visiting card in her hand.

‘If you please, Miss Josceline, this lady has called and wishes to see you on very particular business.’

‘A lady?’ exclaimed Ella; ‘there must be some mistake. What lady?’

‘Miss Burt of Barton Castle.’

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### MISS BURT.

It might well be supposed that after refusing, on the score of physical disability, to see her friends, Ella might have excused herself from receiving a visit from a stranger. Something, however—she scarcely knew what—impelled her to make an exception in favour of Miss Burt, whose name she at once recognised as having been so sympathising a spectator at her father’s funeral; she owed her something, at all events, for that mark of respect, and anything that had just now connection with the dead man had force with her. The message Mrs. Trant had brought, that the lady had very particular business with her, no doubt also aroused her interest. In such a case as hers, to find anyone associated with her lonely lot in any way was a matter of grave importance.

Since the interview seemed to promise to be of a private character, the Doctor and Mrs. Wallace had withdrawn, leaving Ella alone, pale and fragile-looking, but by no means embarrassed (for sorrow conquers shyness), to await her visitor. Of the lady whom Mrs. Trant presently ushered into her presence she could at first only remark that she was tall and slight, and dressed in almost as deep mourning as herself. It was not until the landlady had withdrawn that she raised her veil and disclosed a face of singular beauty. She was not, however, a young woman, nor were her good looks of the kind we are wont to associate with youth; her delicate features bore the traces of sorrow of a far earlier date than that which now possessed them. For the moment, indeed, though her blue eyes were full of tears, one would have said that pity rather than sorrow held the chief place with her, to judge from the tenderness with which she addressed her young companion.

'I am come to you, my dear girl,' she said, 'unsought and unsummoned, in this your hour of trial, to offer you my loving help. My real name, as you doubtless know, is not what is written on that card, but Vallance.'

Ella stared at her visitor in unfeigned astonishment. But for the earnestness of her tone and manner, she would certainly have had doubts of her sanity.

'Vallance!' repeated Ella thoughtfully, 'Vallance! Now you mention the name, madam, it does seem to arouse some sense of association, but so vaguely that it takes no shape.'

The visitor regarded her with a surprise as great as that which her own face had just expressed.

'Do you really mean to tell me, Miss Josceline, that the name of Vallance—Vallance—is unfamiliar to you?'

'Yes, madam; it is utterly unfamiliar. If it is the name, as I conclude, of some friend of my dear father's, I don't remember his ever speaking of it to me.'

At these words Miss Burt sank back in her chair like one less astounded than shocked by some unlooked-for communication of woe; but after a moment or two she seemed to collect her energies, and, uttering a sigh of relief, observed, 'Then at least he never spoke to you in disparagement of any person who bore that name?'

'Most certainly not.'

'Did he never speak of—his—his connections or relations?'

'Very rarely. My father, unhappily, was not on good terms with them. They have always behaved towards him with neglect and coldness and disrespect.'

'Indeed!'

The word was uttered so drily that it was impossible to mistake its significance.

'You would seem to say, madam,' said Ella, with heightened colour, 'that there were faults on both sides. I do not believe it; and in any case this is not the time to discuss the matter.'

'Quite true, dear girl,' answered the other gravely; 'it is not the time for anything but gentleness and forgiveness and submission to God's will. As regards your father's relatives, the Joscelines, be assured that I am not come here as their advocate against him. I know little of them, and I care less. I only care for you.'

'For me?' answered Ella wonderingly. 'You are very kind to say so, but——'

'But why, you would ask,' interrupted the other, perceiving her embarrassment, 'are you thus addressed by one who is a stranger to you, and of whom, as it seems, you have never so much as heard? I hope I have some pity for those who are bereaved, since I have suffered the like sorrow. I hope I have some sympathy with those who are friendless, since I am friendless, too; but it is no feeling of common humanity that brings

me here. There is a tie between us, my dear girl, far closer than that. Is it possible that you can make no guess at what it is?’

Ella shook her head, but not in negation. Her limbs shook under her, her breath came thick and fast with the presentiment that she was on the brink of that revelation which all her life she had been yearning for, but had not dared to precipitate.

‘Think, think again,’ said her companion gently; ‘there must be a problem in your mind that has often presented itself for explanation. Does the name of Vallance suggest nothing to you now?’

‘Was it—was it—’ faltered Ella, ‘my mother’s name?’

‘It was.’

An ineffable tenderness and pity possessed the visitor’s face as she said those words.

‘And you?’ inquired Ella, trembling in every limb. For the moment she thought it possible—just possible—that her mother herself (though Miss Steele had assured her that she was dead) might be standing before her. Upon reflection, however, she felt convinced that the schoolmistress would never have consented to assist in so cruel a deception.

‘I am your mother’s sister,’ said Miss Burt softly; ‘Hester Vallance. Kiss me, darling.’

Her arms had opened wide, and Ella had thrown herself into them as she spoke, in a torrent of tears. The tidings she had just heard, coming so close upon the trying events of the morning, had been too much for her.

‘Don’t speak; don’t try to speak,’ murmured the visitor tenderly; ‘sob out your sorrow on my bosom, darling, for it is loyal to you, and it is your natural home.’

‘But why, oh why?’ murmured the girl, presently, as she lay like a tired child in the other’s arms, ‘did papa never mention you to me?’

‘We will not talk about that now, my dear,’ answered the other in an altered tone; her voice had suddenly become frigid. ‘It is a long story; let it suffice for the present that we have found one another. Now tell me what are your plans?’

In as few words as possible Ella explained the circumstances of her position, and the generous and hospitable offer that had been made to her by Mrs. Wallace.

‘You will, of course, do as you please, my dear,’ said her new-found relative; ‘but it is plain that I am your natural guardian, and, as it happens, I am able to offer you a home. My position, it is true, is but a humble one. I am housekeeper to Mr. Charles Edward, of Barton Castle, but the situation is a very exceptional one. He lives a very secluded life, and leaves all domestic arrangements entirely in my hands. My visit to you is known to him, and the purpose of it. He knows who you are and who I am, and approves of the reasons which have caused me to pass



under a feigned name. If you like to come and live with me—nominally as my assistant, and with a small but sufficient salary—I think I can make you happy. Of the happiness you will confer upon myself by such an arrangement I will not speak, because I wish you to make your choice without pressure. I will now leave you, that you may do so at your leisure and free from all embarrassment. Let me know your decision this evening, and to-morrow I shall return either to bid you good-bye, or to bring you back to what I hope will be your future home.'

Under other circumstances it would naturally have occurred to Ella that so precipitate a leave-taking on the part of her visitor, after a revelation so important and astounding, was somewhat strange. Taking it in connection with the mystery so long surrounding her mother's identity, she might however have ascribed it to its true cause—a desire to avoid for the present all opportunity for asking questions; but as it was, the girl's relief at the prospect of being left alone with the thoughts and considerations that crowded in upon her overpowered all other considerations. She felt her aunt's proposal to be only of a piece with the delicacy and kindness that had distinguished her throughout the interview, and far from endeavouring to prolong it, she only sought to express her happiness and gratitude.

'I shall not be vexed, remember,' were her visitor's last words, 'if you should eventually decline my offer, and prefer that of older friends. On the other hand you must understand (though I am not just now at liberty to explain how this is) that I am offering you no menial position. You will be your own mistress—strange as it may appear to you—or nearly so, as much as you are at this moment. And I will only add that you will receive from me the welcome of a mother.'

With one more affectionate, nay, passionate embrace, she was gone, leaving Ella in a tumult of expectations and apprehensions, such as might have resulted from the visit of a denizen of the other world. That some painful secret was connected with her dead mother she felt certain, or surely her new-found relative would have been less reticent concerning her; nor did it fail to strike her that her aunt had omitted to speak one word of condolence respecting her recent bereavement. This latter fact, however, she put down to a disinclination to open anew the floodgates of her grief. Her aunt had come to make a definite offer, to which it was necessary for her to say yea, or nay, within a few hours; and her object had naturally been to keep her niece's mind free to deal with it, and as undisturbed by sentimental emotions as possible.

To Ella it was an inexpressible joy to find herself no longer the waif and stray on the ocean of life that she had pictured herself; to know that she had not lost, as she had imagined, the only tie that connected her with the human family. And had not Mrs. Wallace herself acknowledged, though so earnestly desirous that she

should make her home with her, that the bond of kindred had a prior claim to that of friendship? At Barton Castle she would be quite close to where they had laid him who had been, and still was, the dearest to her on earth, and living there she could pay him daily reverence. This perhaps just now was the reflection that weighed most with her. But she also remembered that Mr. Aird had announced his intention of visiting Foracre Farm, whereas at Barton Castle she would be free from the embarrassment of his presence. Moreover Mr. Edward, as it seemed, lived the life of a recluse, and the members of his household would necessarily pass their days in quiet and solitude, which for the present were of all things what she most desired. As for the duties in store for her, they would be welcome to her whatever they might be; and in performing them to her uttermost she should give pleasure to her aunt, which would be reward enough. It had been one of her misgivings that at Foracre Farm she would be a useless appendage to the establishment, and perforce unable to repay in any way the hospitality that had been offered to her. Upon the whole she made up her mind to accept her aunt's proposal.

With anyone but Mrs. Wallace she would have feared to appear ungracious in thus declining at the last moment her offer of a home, and even as it was the task was an embarrassing one. More than all she feared her friend would express a natural curiosity concerning Miss Burt—the reason of her change of name, &c.—and especially would seek to know on what account that lady had imitated Mr. Josceline's reticence with respect to his late wife. To Ella all reference to her mother was at once both hallowed and tender ground, and she shrank, though she scarce knew why, from treading on it. As it happened, however, Mrs. Armytage's vehement onslaught against the late Mr. Josceline in the ladies' drawing-room had put Mrs. Wallace on her guard. She was slow to believe in scandal at any time, and least of all when it was directed against her friends. But she felt it was possible there had been something wrong in the relations between Mr. Josceline and his wife, and her lips were therefore sealed as regarded any mention of her to Ella. As to the arrangement proposed by Miss Burt for Ella's future, Mrs. Wallace only regretted it on her own account, which in her case was always a subsidiary matter; so far as her young friend was concerned, she rejoiced that she had found a relative and a home.

'And if upon acquaintance with them, my dear, you do not like them,' she said tenderly, 'remember that a loving welcome always awaits you at Foracre Farm. Of course it is a great disappointment to us; I am afraid to say how great, because that might make you conceited,' she added, smiling (the tears had risen to her eyes, and she wished to do away with their effect); 'but it would be very selfish in William and myself to wish matters otherwise, since you have now, you see, what it is always well to have, two strings to your bow.'

What alone, therefore, now weighed upon Ella's mind with respect to her departure, was the saying 'good-bye' to those who would fain have been her host and hostess, and the apparent ingratitude she was about to exhibit in leaving it unsaid to others. Her disinclination for any meeting with Mr. Aird was, however, so excessive, and the impossibility of omitting him, if she made an exception in favour of any one, so obvious, that to this latter resolve she adhered. Dr. Cooper had promised that he would make her excuses for her—not only with the authority and decision that his profession enabled him to do, but with every expression of kindness and gratitude; and with that assurance she would have had to be content, but for a happy thought suggested by little Davey. When the child came to take leave of her on the morning of her departure—an interview which affected her exceedingly, and would have done so still more could she have foreseen the future—she made him also a medium of acknowledgment to his father of the generosity he would have shown her, and of her thanks to his friends Felspar and Vernon for the many evidences of their goodwill.

At noon came her aunt with a closed carriage for her, in which she left for Barton; her life at the *Ultramarine*, until those last sad days, had been a very happy one, and to leave it and the friends she had made there cost her no small pain; yet if she had been going to Devon she felt that her grief would have been still more keen, for she would have been in that case leaving the dead as well as the living.

'Mrs. Trant tells me that you leave behind you many a well-wisher at Wallington, my dear,' said her aunt, softly, as they wound down the hill to the village.

'Yes, yes,' scbbled Ella, 'every one at the hotel has been so kind.' But she was not thinking only of those at the hotel.

Presently they passed Clover Cottage, at the door of which stood both its tenants, with bared heads, and every appearance of sympathy and respect.

'Mr. Felspar I know by sight,' said Miss Burt, as they passed by; 'but who was that other young man, who showed such great feeling?'

'It was a Mr.—Mr. Vernon,' stammered Ella.

Miss Burt regarded her young companion thoughtfully for a few minutes, and then said, 'I fear you will find the Castle very dull, my dear, after the life you have been accustomed to lead. His Highness sees absolutely no company.'

'His Highness?'

'Yes; by-the-bye, that is what he prefers to be called. Perhaps—though it is not absolutely necessary—you would not mind making use of the term just once—when you first see him; afterwards you can always call him "Sir."'

'But is he not Mr. Edwards?'

'Hush! not Edwards at all, the name is Edward; but that is

only an incognito. I will tell you all about him presently ; but if you don't mind very much, at your introduction to him, it would be a great point—a very great point indeed—if you would kiss his hand.'

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## BARTON CASTLE.

'IF I don't mind it very much I am to kiss his hand,' was the thought that monopolised Ella's mind as the carriage passed through the lodge gates—unlocked to receive them, and closed and fastened directly they had entered—and drove through the broad avenue of oaks that led to Barton Castle. Who on earth, then, was this Mr. Edward to whose household she was about to belong, and what was the mystery in connection with him? From the gossip at Wallington she had only learnt that he was a recluse, kind and charitable to the poor, but always employing others to be his almoners; and that he lived in a sort of semi-state, though without seeing company of any kind. Her impression had been that he was an eccentric personage who, having taken some unreasonable disgust to society, made use of his great wealth to render him entirely independent of it. She remembered the information which the postilion had given about him on their arrival, and it now recurred to her mind that her father had on that occasion shown a considerable interest in the man's relation of the matter, as though it had in some way concerned himself. Was it possible that he was aware that her mother's sister was living in the service of Mr. Edward? In that case she did not wonder at his reticence, for she well knew, notwithstanding his openly expressed contempt for the Joscelines, he had a great deal of family pride. And again, who was this Mr. Edward to whom a woman of culture and refinement, as her aunt evidently was, could play the housekeeper without, as it seemed, any sense of humiliation?

As she came in sight of the Castle, she saw the red flag flying on its midmost tower, which, as she now remembered, betokened (as though he were a royal personage) the presence of its tenant. For the moment, her recent loss, and the novel circumstances in which she had so suddenly and unexpectedly found herself, were lost sight of in an overmastering curiosity.

As the carriage drove up at the foot of the broad stone steps that led to the entrance of the Castle, two footmen in scarlet liveries appeared, as if jerked out by a spring, on either side of it, while a personage in sober black, but with knee-breeches, silk stockings, and shoes fastened by a silver buckle, came down to meet them.



‘The groom of the chambers,’ whispered Miss Burt, in answer to Ella’s questioning glance, who, in her simplicity and amazement, was by no means certain that it was not His Highness himself.

This official conducted them into a noble hall, the walls of which were hung with ancestral pictures, alternating with armour and ancient weapons of all sorts. In the centre of it, as if to welcome them, stood a short thickset man in ordinary costume, except that his fingers were laden with more rings than is usual with the masculine sex. His brown hair, which was thin and lank, stuck closely to his blonde and pudgy face, like reeds about a cream cheese, and his whole appearance would have been vulgar, as it was certainly uncomely, but for a pair of brilliant brown eyes, which by their vivacity and intelligence went far to redeem it. For all that Ella knew, this again might have been the lord of the Castle himself—it was like opening a present packed with layer after layer of paper, each of which to the curious recipient appears to be the final one—but her doubts on this point were once more dispelled by her companion, who introduced the personage in question as ‘Mr. Heyton, His Highness’s secretary.’

It did not escape Ella’s natural quickness, stimulated as it was by curiosity, that her aunt’s tone was stiff and frigid; moreover, she noticed that her introducer made no mention of her being her niece. As Miss Burt’s manner in other respects conveyed no sense of disparity of rank on either side, Ella justly concluded that Mr. Edward’s housekeeper (if such indeed was her aunt’s position at the Castle) was not on friendly terms with Mr. Edward’s secretary. Mr. Heyton’s manner, on the other hand, was studiously polite and even effusive. His voice was soft and low, and he had a way of placing his white plump glistening hand on the region of his heart as he spoke, that gave a sort of dramatic earnestness to what would have been otherwise small talk.

‘You have brought the sunshine with you, Miss Josceline, as indeed,’ he added, with a parenthetic bow, ‘might only be expected. You could scarcely have seen the Castle for the first time under more favourable circumstances.’

‘The park looked very beautiful as we came along,’ replied Ella, scarce knowing what she said; for Mr. Heyton’s keen and penetrating eyes gave her at least as much discomfort and embarrassment as did his compliment.

‘It is fortunate that Barton possesses some natural beauties,’ continued the secretary, ‘since it has little else to interest the visitor. I am afraid after the changeful society at the *Ultra-marine* that you will find our life here very insipid. We must, however, do our best to afford you some amusement.’

‘Miss Josceline is not just now in a mood for amusement, nor even to make new acquaintances,’ observed Miss Burt with severity. ‘You do not appear to comprehend that she is suffering from a recent bereavement.’



‘Pardon me,’ returned Mr. Heyton, in a tone at once unabashed and cheerful; ‘there is no one,’ and here he touched his heart, ‘who deplores it more than myself. But, in my poor judgment, it is better under such sad circumstances to endeavour to distract the mind by innocent and wholesome enjoyments.’

‘Has His Highness expressed a wish to see Miss Josceline?’ inquired Miss Burt, without taking any notice of this recipe for depressed spirits, and speaking even more scornfully than before.

‘If it is quite convenient to her, I have his orders to introduce her at once,’ and he turned to Ella as if to consult her wishes.

‘Nay,’ said Miss Burt firmly, ‘I must claim for once to usurp your office, Mr. Heyton, and to conduct Miss Josceline to his presence myself.’

With a significant pressure on Ella’s arm, she led her to a door at the extremity of the hall. It stood in shadow, but Ella noticed it was surmounted by a small gilt coronet. Miss Burt knocked sharply on one of its carved panels, and a voice within bade them enter.

The room to which they had thus gained admittance was somewhat remarkable. Its one window, which would otherwise have commanded the park, was entirely composed of painted glass, diffusing a sort of gaudy gloom; the walls were lined with ancient tapestry, which still further subdued the light; so that had it not been for some assistance from a skylight, itself concealed by a horizontal curtain of white silk, the objects in the apartment would hardly have been discernible. As it was, the rays from above were concentrated in a peculiar manner at the far end of the room, so as to bring out in strong relief the figure of its solitary tenant. This was a man of about five-and-forty years of age, of swarthy complexion, and with grave and glittering eyes. He had been seated at a desk covered with ancient parchments, from which he rose with dignity as the ladies entered, and came forward a few steps to meet them.

‘Your Highness, this is my niece, Miss Josceline, of whom I have had the honour to speak to you.’

Mr. Edward (to use the only name by which the tenant of Barton Castle was known to his neighbours) turned on the young girl a compassionate look, which would have been almost parental save for a certain touch of condescension, and held out a large white hand.

Perhaps, in her confusion, Ella forgot the injunction that had been laid on her, or it might be that her pride revolted against obeying it; but, instead of kissing the proffered hand, she held out her own to meet it.

Mr. Edward smiled good-naturedly, as a grown person might do at a child’s mistake, and pressed her fingers warmly.

‘I am acquainted,’ he said, in tender, though somewhat sonorous tones, ‘with your recent loss, Miss Josceline, and beg of you

to be assured of my most sincere sympathy. In the quiet of Barton, and in the loving custody of your aunt, I trust you will recover in time your health and spirits. For the present, as you have doubtless been informed, we are living in great retirement, such as is hardly suitable, I fear, to youth and beauty.'

'It is most suitable, sir, to me,' said Ella quietly, 'and will be very welcome.'

The compliment he had paid her, though similar to that of his secretary, did not give her the same offence. The air and manner of the speaker was stately and measured, while his words seemed to partake of the nature of a general sentiment rather than to have any personal application.

'I am deeply grateful,' she added, 'that through my aunt's good offices you have been so good as to offer me——' She hesitated; for, in fact, she did not know what had been offered her, and she could not bring herself to say 'a situation,' as though she were the new housemaid.

'Let us say a home,' put in Mr. Edward kindly, 'if, as we hope, we shall be able to make it appear such. Miss Burt has, I hope, made it plain to you that you will be our guest, so long as it suits you to remain at Barton Castle.'

'You are most kind—most generous, sir,' said Ella, deeply touched by the other's delicacy and consideration; 'but I trust——' she was about to add some equivalent, which in her confusion she could not find, for the expression of a hope that she might be of some assistance to her aunt, when that lady pulled her by the sleeve. She then perceived that her host was once more holding out his hand to her, no doubt to indicate that the interview was over. With a sudden impulse, born less of gratitude than the desire to please, she took his extended fingers and raised them to her lips.

Mr. Edward smiled at her more benignly than ever. 'The members of my household,' he said (in a tone that might have implied there were two hundred instead of two of them) 'generally associate together; but you will keep to your own apartments or not, as you please, Miss Josceline.'

Ella felt herself gently pulled from behind, and, yielding to the pressure, she mechanically did what her relative did by design—namely, backed, as from a presentation at Court, out of their host's presence.

Overcome by contending emotions, some of them serious enough, but the very seriousness of which by the strong sense of contrast heightened the absurdity of her position, no sooner had the door closed behind her than Ella broke into a little laugh, which had at least as much of hysterics as of mirth in it.

'Hush! hush!' cried Miss Burt earnestly.

'But, my dear aunt, it was so very funny, that giving me his hand to kiss, and our going out of the room backwards.'

'Still, my dear, when you are as old as I am,' replied her com-

panion gravely, 'you will have learnt that kindness and delicacy are much too rare in this world—no matter by what weaknesses they may be accompanied—to afford a subject of ridicule. The man you have just seen is one of the noblest and most generous of created beings. It does seem strange, no doubt,' she added, very gently. 'I do not blame you for thinking him a little mad; but, oh! my dear, if all the sane people had but half his virtues, this earth would be far more like heaven. But walls have ears in this house. Come in here, my darling, where we shall be always quite private, and I'll tell you all about him.'

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## A REVELATION.

'WHAT a lovely little room!' was Ella's first exclamation on being introduced to an apartment the beauty of which compelled her admiration, consumed though she was with curiosity to learn the history of her mysterious host; 'you don't mean to say that I may always sit with you alone.'

'You may when you wish me to come and see you,' returned Miss Burt, all sign of distress swept from her pleasant face, and replaced by the best of expressions, the sense of having given pleasure to another; 'it is your own private snuggerly, my dear, and no one else's.'

'Mine! what, this lovely sitting-room!' She looked round with delight upon the well-filled bookcases that lined the walls, the fresh flowers upon the table, and the piano with its layers of music books. 'Oh, how can I thank you enough, Aunt Hester?'

'You can thank me best,' answered the other, with glistening eyes, 'by being happy here; only remember it is not I to whom you are indebted. I have only had the arrangement of matters.'

'Yes, but with what forethought and kindness you have arranged them! This is the outlook'—she pointed to the window, which, though it had the park for a foreground, commanded a side view of the village churchyard—'which of all others in this world I should have preferred. While sitting here, I can still fancy myself near my dear father.'

'That, however, was not the reason why I placed you here,' observed the other. Her tone was so peculiar that Ella looked at her in some amazement. 'That is, my dear,' continued her aunt, very gently, 'it was no portion of my plan for your happiness to keep alive in your mind any sad memories. I chose the room because it has a north aspect, which is most suitable for painting, and a little bird has told me that you are an artist.'

'The little bird must have had a very flattering note,' replied Ella, smiling; 'but if locality and surroundings make the artist, I

ought to be a credit to the profession. It is a bower for a princess. What lovely flowers, and what beautiful books ! Why have they all a coronet upon them ?

‘It is not a coronet, my dear, it is a crown,’ returned Miss Burt, with a gravity that seemed quite out of proportion with the rectification of so slight an error ; and that forms a portion of what I have now to tell you. Did you ever hear the story of the infant Stuart of St. Rosalie ?

‘Never.’

‘Well, briefly, there are some who maintain that the Young Pretender as he was called, Charles Edward’—she hung for a moment on these two words—‘left behind him a legal heir, by his wife, the Princess Louisa Maximiliana de Stolberg. This child is said to have been brought to England, where he grew up and married. It was a *mésalliance* in one sense, of course, supposing him to have been the man he was affirmed to be, but the union was a legal one, and had issue in one son. The family, the heads of which are known as the Comtes d’Albanie, is not the only one which assumes to be descended from him. Mr. Charles Edward—for so he chooses to be called by the outside world, instead of by his patronymic of Stuart—claims to be no other than the great-grandson of the Young Pretender, and heir to the English throne.’

‘Gracious goodness !’ ejaculated poor Ella. The exclamation fell very short of her amazement, and was, she felt, sadly commonplace, and altogether inadequate to the occasion. ‘Does he think he is the King of England ?’

‘*De jure*, yes ; he is as certain of it as that he has breath in his body.’

‘And do you believe it, Aunt Hester ?’

‘Don’t ask me, darling. I can only say that I try not to disbelieve it. Of one thing I am sure, that no more noble and princely heart ever beat in human breast than that of the man I speak of ; he is generosity itself, and possesses every other attribute that may become a king.’

‘Then that’s why you call him His Highness, and wanted me to kiss his hand ?’ observed the wondering girl ; her astonishment at her host’s pretensions preventing her for the moment from paying attention to the other’s eulogium on his virtues.

‘Yes, I thought it was better for you to do it, if possible, before you knew the reason, for fear—well, I am sure you would not have laughed about it if I had told you how deeply—and being so good a man—he takes the thing to heart ; but now for my sake, darling, for my sake——’

‘I am not going to laugh, Aunt Hester, I am not indeed,’ said Ella assuringly, though only too conscious that she was on the confines of laughter.

‘I am afraid you were, my dear ; you looked like it ; and of course people do laugh, who don’t know His Highness, when they hear him spoken of by that name for the first time. Up to this



point I am sure you have behaved admirably. I never knew him so taken with anybody as he seemed to be with you, and it's only the first time that he insists—not, however, that he is at all exacting—on having what he considers the proper marks of respect paid to him. And you did pay them, most gracefully and most naturally I am sure.'

'But I am not sure that it was right,' said Ella doubtfully; 'it is surely very hypocritical——'

'That is just why I didn't tell you,' interrupted her companion naïvely. 'She has such an independent spirit,' I said to myself, 'that if she knows, and doubts (and I don't mean to say doubting is not natural, at all events till you come to know him), she will never stoop to flatter him. But if she doesn't know, and only wishes to please him, and since to kiss his hand is so very simple—don't you see?'

'I am afraid, Aunt Hester, you are not very simple,' said Ella, smiling, but on the contrary, very artful and diplomatic. I don't believe I could ever have brought myself to do it—I think not, I hope not—if I had thought I was flattering his credulity.'

'Nay, dear child, it is not that,' returned the other earnestly. 'Nothing that you could say or do, or that anybody else could say or do, or omit saying or doing, would make the slightest difference to his own convictions on the matter. He may be wrong, but in the faith that he is the last of the Stuarts, and their only lineal descendant, he is fixed, and will die in it.'

'But, my dear aunt, he must know at least that other people are not of that opinion?'

'He knows that the outside world are not, and has therefore cut himself off from them.'

'But the inside world?' persisted Ella; 'does he suppose that the members of his household, as he calls them, believe him to be Charles Edward Stuart?'

'Most certainly he does.'

'And *do* they believe him to be so? I do not speak of yourself, of course,' put in Ella quickly, perceiving a look of distress and pain flit over her companion's face; 'you have already explained to me your own position. But do those who are not so easily moved to admiration by his good qualities, who are not so susceptible of gratitude, and not so anxious to confer happiness on others, as you are—let us take Mr. Heyton for example——'

'How do you know that Mr. Heyton is not susceptible of gratitude?' put in her companion keenly.

'I did not say that, my dear aunt; I was only speaking comparatively, though I should certainly think he was not given to enthusiasm; he seemed to me, I must confess, somewhat affected and finical.'

'He did, did he?' replied Miss Burt with a quiet smile. 'You come to your conclusions—though, mind you, I don't say you are wrong in this particular case—very rapidly, my dear.'



'Nay, it is only an impression, not a conclusion. But you have not answered my question yet. Does Mr. Heyton—His Highness's own secretary—believe in these pretensions?'

'You had better ask him yourself,' answered Miss Burt evasively. 'I will say, however, if His Highness's claims were acknowledged—his rank a matter of public notoriety—Mr. Heyton could not treat him with more outward reverence. It is he who helps to make things stiffer and more formal here than they otherwise would be. If his master were a mere dreamer, in fact, which is not the case, you would say that he encouraged him in his hallucinations.'

'I see; he humours him like the prince in the play, to the top of his bent.'

'I would not say that, my dear,' answered Miss Burt reproachfully. 'His Highness, unlike Hamlet, is neither mad nor does he pretend to be so; and as for Mr. Heyton, it is not for me to look into his heart.'

'And the servants?'

'They know nothing. They are highly paid for an exceptional service, and they perform it. Perhaps the mystery that surrounds their master invests him with as much respect as though they were convinced of his claims. You are quite right to endeavour to ascertain how matters stand here, my dear,' she continued kindly; 'it is necessary to your own position that you should do so. If anything is still on your mind, as I think it is, pray give expression to it; it will not offend me.'

'Indeed, Aunt Hester, I have asked questions enough, when it was rather my place to have been silent, and to have taken with thankfulness what your kindness has provided me with; but everything is so new, and strange, and unexpected, and—and—I am not quite sure that—that——'

'You mean you are not quite sure, my dear,' interrupted her companion quietly, 'that in remaining here and accepting His Highness's hospitality, you are not doing wrong?'

'That is just what I wanted to say,' said Ella, 'though it seems so ungracious, and—and——'

'Such a reflection on myself, you mean, my dear,' observed her companion, again coming to the rescue. 'What you feel, but do not like to express, for fear of wounding my feelings, is that you are accepting His Highness's hospitality under false pretences. Now let me put you right on that point. You are doing nothing of the kind. His Highness knows, as well as I do, that you do not as yet believe in him. He may be a fanatic or a visionary (though, as I have said, in my opinion, he is neither), but no one who knows him can think him to be a fool. What he hopes is that in time you may become a convert to his views.'

'That he ought to be the King of England?' ejaculated Ella. 'Oh dear me! I could never think that.'

'Nor need you, my dear,' continued the other earnestly. 'It

is even doubtful whether he goes so far as that himself. It is a mere question of evidence in connection with the St. Rosalie story. Even if that is true, he is at most the last of the Stuarts, just as Cardinal York was thought to be before him. Do not suppose, my dear child, that the scruples you entertain did not at one time occur to me also; but I am thankful to say they exist no longer, and I do my duty without a prick of conscience. It is true, however, that I am under the greatest obligations to His Highness. The opportunity of entering his service was offered me at a most opportune time, and in the most gracious manner; and his kindness to me then and since has been excessive.'

'That, of course, makes a difference,' said Ella thoughtfully. She could well imagine that a sensitive and affectionate person like her companion, naturally free from scepticism, could easily bring herself to believe in those she loved. 'Would it be an impertinence to ask, Aunt Hester, how it was that you first became acquainted with—with His Highness?'

'It is certainly no impertinence, my dear,' answered the other gravely. 'Indeed, sooner or later I felt that you must needs put that question; but, for the present, let it suffice to say that the circumstances under which I was first introduced to him were painful and peculiar. I came to him—not, indeed, under a false pretence, for I told him all—but under a false name, in consequence of a domestic calamity, and in seeking for a livelihood and seclusion I found a competence and a home.'

'Had the domestic calamity, Aunt Hester,' inquired Ella, in hesitating tones, 'anything to do with my mother?'

'Yes.'

Only that one word, but freighted with enough tenderness and sorrow to have sufficed for a new *In Memoriam*.

'May I not ask about her?' inquired Ella pitifully, her face as white as the dawn, and with a shiver as though 'the breeze from out the distant gloom' were stealing over her. 'May I not ask about my own mother?'

'It is better not, my darling; only pain can come of it.'

Ella bowed her head, and was silent for many minutes. The secret of her father's silence concerning her mother had at last, then, been revealed to her. Oh, fatal curiosity! how far better it would have been for her to have died and never known it! How many tender fancies, how many self-imagined memories, had once filled her heart! She only knew now that they had been rudely shattered. 'Let me know the worst,' she presently said, in a low and husky voice.

'The worst?' answered her companion, with look of distress and horror. 'The worst of whom?'

'Of my—my mother.'

'The worst of her?' exclaimed Aunt Hester, with passionate vehemence; 'you must be mad, child. There is no worst. There was no bad connected with her from first to last; she was the best,

and purest, and most long-suffering of women ; and she is now an angel in heaven.'

Ella threw herself on her knees, and, with a sharp cry of pain, laid her face in Aunt Hester's lap.

'Oh, how wicked I have been!' she sobbed. 'How wicked, and how vile, to have entertained a thought of ill of her who bore me!'

Aunt Hester looked down on her with an indescribable gentleness, and softly smoothed the wandering tresses that hung about her knees.

'It is a sad and shameful story, darling ; but the sadness was your mother's, and the shame—another's. She suffered from the slander of evil tongues ; but she was sinned against, not sinning. Let us not think of it—let us not speak of it.'

Alas ! it is easy to say 'let us not think' of this or that ; but there are thoughts which have more force than deeds with us, and are far more importunate. Ella's mind had indeed been relieved of one burthen—the terrible suspicion of the wrong-doing of the mother she had never known ; but it had been replaced by one of almost equal weight, the conviction of the wrong-doing of the father whom she had known.

'Were papa—and mamma—separated?' she presently whispered ; 'actually separated?'

'She obtained a divorce from him,' was the reply, in a tone which implied compassion indeed, but also the desire of the speaker to be quite distinct upon that matter. 'It was then that she came to live with me. Our love had passed the love of sisters, but in an evil hour she had exchanged it for——. No matter ; it was always hers, and waited for her. I changed the name which had once been hers (because she wished it), to avoid recognition and to efface the past. She died when you were an unconscious infant, in these loving arms ; but her heart was with you to the last. "My poor child!" were her last words.'

'God help me ! What am I to think—what am I to do?' cried Ella despairingly.

'Imitate her goodness, my darling ; revere her memory,' returned Aunt Hester. 'You can do nothing more, and she needs nothing, being in heaven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' She stooped down and kissed her niece's cheek. 'I will leave you for a little to yourself,' she said. 'This is the last time I shall speak about the past, my child. If I could have spared you, I would have done so ; but the truth had to be told.'

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE CHURCHYARD.

Is there anything worse than loss ?

To say he has departed,  
His voice, his face is gone—  
To feel impatient-hearted,  
Yet know we must bear on.

Is not that the very climax of human woe? To most of us, thank heaven, it is so; but to some few exceptional sufferers there is a still more bitter drop to be drained from the cup of life. It is the conviction forced upon us, after the loved one's death, that he was not so worthy as we had thought him to be. Ella Josceline was by nature too sensible, by habit too truthful, by disposition too genuine, to have made for herself a picture of her father's character, even though he was lost to her, of the saintly or even the sentimental sort. She was aware that he had been a man of the world, and though she did not know all that is signified by that term (nor the tenth of it), she knew enough to dispel the mere conventional filial illusions. On the other hand, she had not only admired him and felt a pride in him, but had loved him for his own sake, quite independently of the love he had borne to her, and which had been naturally reciprocated. Whatever might have been his faults—and she had admitted to herself the probability of their existence—she had always believed him kind; and now that he was in his grave, and all his acts and words of love for her were fresh in her memory (which, indeed, as respected herself, retained nothing to his disadvantage), she had been suddenly given to understand that it was not so—that, in a word, he had been cruel, faithless, and, where it behoved him to have sought forgiveness, implacable and vindictive. For that he had maintained so ominous a reticence concerning his married life from shame or self-reproach, she knew him better than to believe; and if she did not give credit to the charge brought against him, she must needs believe that in some measure, if it were but as regarded 'incompatibility of temper'—vague term, but significant of so much—her own mother was to blame. At the moment, she was unaware that her father had once been a clergyman, who had been disgraced; but it is doubtful whether that revelation could have increased the sum of her present sorrow. To her thought, the desecration of the office would have sunk into insignificance beside the disgrace of the man. If he had disregarded the most sacred of human feelings—made his own wife miserable, his own

home desolate—that his ministrations at the altar should have been a profanation and ineffectual would have followed as a matter of course.

For a time, the charge against her father, doubling as it did her sense of recent bereavement (for it seemed to her that she was losing him, or, rather, what she had thought to be him, a second time), overwhelmed the girl almost utterly; but by degrees the 'low beginnings,' not indeed 'of content,' but of comfort, began to stir within her. She reflected that her aunt was the kin of the one party in this sad dispute, and the antagonist, in all probability from the very first, of the other; and, without disloyalty to her mother, she was able to convince herself that if the conduct of her father had not been represented to her in a partisan light, it had at all events been exaggerated and made the worst of. And yet, so strong was her sense of justice, that she felt no indignation against Aunt Hester for the colouring which this suggestion presupposed her to have put upon the unhappy history of her parents. It was only natural that she should have seen all the virtues of the one and all the shortcomings of the other. As for herself, the best, and indeed the only course that was left to her, was to dismiss from her mind as far as possible this evil record of the past, to cling to the good of which she had been told, and to the good of which she had had experience, and to forget the sorrow of the one parent and the shame of the other. Were they not both in heaven, as she hoped and believed, reunited and reconciled? Why, then, should she think of them as separated and antagonistic?

To this resolve—difficult and austere, it may here be said—she in the main adhered, and it had this immediate advantage, that it withdrew her mind from the morbid contemplation of death and loss, and forced it into other channels. To her aunt it seemed that the girl had wonderfully soon 'got over' her trouble, which that lady ascribed to the conviction produced by her own arguments that the late Mr. Josceline was not a person whose society was, on the whole, to be grudged to the angels—in which matter she much misjudged her niece.

On this very occasion, indeed, when the tumult of her emotions had subsided, Ella's first act on leaving her room was to let herself out by a postern door, which her aunt had indicated to her, and which opened into the park, and take her way to the churchyard. Under the shadow of God's house, and beneath the tender sky, it would be hard indeed if any disparaging thoughts should intrude upon her concerning the dead who lay there; nor did they do so. On the other hand, her reflections did not wholly confine themselves to the channel that she had in a manner marked out for them. There is no doubt that conventional persons have the advantage over others in keeping their spiritual thoughts under control; the people whom the apostle rather brusquely expresses himself as being 'ashamed of,' because of



their respect for times and for seasons—saints' days and Sundays—and who form, after all, the bulk of our respectable church and chapel goers. As soon as they find themselves in the 'sacred edifice,' as they term it, their thoughts mechanically detach themselves from worldly matters, and shoot heavenwards, though not perhaps to any great altitude, as though from a spring-board. Such a disposition of mind seems to me as enviable as it is commendable; but it is certain that others, who are occasionally at least capable of much higher flights of devotion, do not share this gift. They find a difficulty in being religious of malice aforethought, as the law terms it. The presence of a bird in the church, or even of a butterfly, is fatal to them; at the sight of the many-hued intruder their mind flies to the scheme of creation, with its wonders and its beauties, with its mysteries and its contradictions; they cannot for their lives follow, as they would fain do, the Rev. Mr. Poundtext in his exposition (not altogether novel, perhaps) of 'Fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute.' On an Ash Wednesday they are unable to feel any wickedder than they did before Lent began; while on the other hand, on the most cheerful of the Church's festivals they may be bowed down with remorse and penitence. In this respect the character of Ella Josceline was sadly wanting. She had an 'undisciplined mind,' otherwise it would surely not have happened that, standing by her father's grave, with her heart, as it were, swept and garnished and prepared for the reception of heavenly thoughts, it should suddenly have received worldly tenants. Yet the first thing that struck her as she gazed upon the fresh-turned turf was that it was strewn with flowers, and the first question that she put to herself, so far from being a soul-searching one of the proper kind, was 'Whose hand could have placed them there?' She had herself, on her way through the park, gathered a few wild flowers with that pious purpose; not that the Hon. George Emilius Josceline had greatly cared for wild flowers during his lifetime, or had presumably changed his taste in the interim, but simply that they were all that she had to give, and that they seemed in some vague and gracious way to express her filial love. But the tribute which had been already paid was of another and far more costly kind—the rarest and purest treasures of the conservatory—camellias, azaleas, and lilies of virgin whiteness, but with the very name of which she was unacquainted. What pious hand could have done her father such rich reverence? That it was not Aunt Hester she felt certain; at the best, her relative had only displayed towards him a cold indifference—at the worst, an ill-concealed antagonism. Was it, could it be the same hand which yesterday had done the like—that of Mr. Vernon? The colour rushed into her pale face as this suggestion occurred to her, and her heart beat with quicker throbs. It was curious that she never thought of Mr. Felspar, though she had been informed that the earlier gift had come from Clover Cottage, and had therefore in all probability

been a joint contribution from the two young men. The next moment, however, it struck her that not only in the former case had the flowers been of the common garden kind, but that at Wallington camellias and azaleas were unattainable. In the Castle alone, where there was doubtless a conservatory, could they be procured, and therefore from the Castle they must have come. They were doubtless, then, a gift from His Highness.

To some minds this would have seemed a delicate attention; but to Ella, although she acknowledged the kindness of the act, it was on the whole displeasing. From Mr. Vernon, who had known her father, such a tribute was touching and grateful; but from a stranger's hand it was far otherwise. There was something, too—though it only vaguely presented itself to her mind—of unhappy appropriateness in these costly blossoms; unlike the simple wild flowers she had gathered, and which they seemed to flaunt as a high-born beauty despises the daughter of the fields, they were of artificial growth, as the character—and especially the faults—of her father had been. Fashion and splendour had never been welcome to her, but they had now become hateful. She felt doubtful whether, no matter under what easy conditions, she could live long in yonder Castle, surrounded with pomp and stateliness, although the glitter was of tinsel. The thought of homely Mrs. Wallace and of that farmhouse in Devonshire came over her like a breath of fresh air. But upon that home she had no claim; whereas upon this one she had a sort of right by proxy, so far as her aunt's services to its lord entitled her to it. What she yearned for was independence, and this could be only gained by her own exertions. 'Work! work!' was now the one cry of her bruised heart. In work she might forget her sorrows, and begin life anew; and she felt that she ought to be grateful for the asylum that had been offered to her, and where the leisure and opportunity for study would at least be hers. In the rapid glance she had cast at the bookcase in her sitting-room, she had noticed that it had included some works on perspective and figure drawing, and to these she resolved to apply herself. She felt a hunger in her heart to be up and doing, such as rarely comes to a young girl; and yet she had been orphaned but one short week. The luxury of grief was denied to her, as it is always denied to those who are poor. Henceforward, not death, but life, and how to make her way in it, was to be the matter for her thoughts. Such was the frame of mind in which Ella Josceline turned away from her father's grave. If Mrs. Armytage had been aware of it, she would have sarcastically termed it a 'very pretty' one; but it was not poor Ella's fault, but the force of circumstances, that restrained her emotions within such very moderate limits. Her ears and eyes, and her powers of mental observation, were as alive to all that passed about her as though they had never known the torpor of bereavement.

Her way back to the postern was a footpath, which, after it

left the churchyard, was intersected by another that led to the front of the Castle; along this second path there was coming some person whom, as they approached one another, she made out to be Mr. Heyton. She had no wish to meet him, and therefore moved more slowly that he might pass by, on his way up the park, before she reached the intersection; but, to her annoyance, he decreased his own speed so as exactly to meet her. This was bad taste in him, she thought, considering that, seeing her come from the churchyard, he might so easily have guessed her late errand. But Mr. Heyton's expression did not wear by any means the expression of one who had, or could have had, bad taste imputed to him; it was one of serene but affable self-complacence. He raised his hat a few inches, with gradual grace, and murmured a hope that the beauty of Barton Park came up to Miss Josceline's expectation.

'It is a lovely spot,' she said.

'Hitherto,' he continued, 'our home landscape has lacked a fitting figure in the foreground to set off its beauties. It now possesses one.'

For the moment Ella felt inclined to be indignant, but the air of the man was so exaggerated, and the manner in which his right hand sought his heart so dramatically droll, that it was almost impossible to be seriously offended with him. Her view of the case was that His Highness's secretary, having no belief in the genuineness of his master's pretensions, found it necessary to 'make believe very much,' and to practise courtly airs and graces on every opportunity, in order to keep up his *rôle*.

'I should have thought,' said Ella gravely, 'that the best figures in the foreground of a park were herds of deer, such as the pretty creatures I see yonder.'

'You may call them pretty creatures,' said Mr. Heyton, with irritation, 'but handsome is as handsome does, and some of them are not nearly so nice as they look. There are half a dozen as savage beasts among them as you may find in the Zoological Gardens, and more than once, but for my personal agility, my life would have been sacrificed to their fury.'

'Indeed!' said Ella. The word was not a very sympathetic one, but the fact was, the idea of Mr. Heyton—a gentleman certainly stout and pudgy, and presumably short-winded—pursued by stags, and escaping from them by reason of his superior speed, was so exceedingly striking and incongruous, that she could hardly keep her countenance.

'Yes,' he resumed; 'most persons would have had enough of it, and not ventured in the park again; and indeed it would be no great punishment if at Barton one's home walks were restricted to the private gardens. By-the-by, you have not seen the gardens? It is His Highness's wish that you should make use of them. Permit me to be your cicerone. It won't take you ten minutes,' he added, as Ella hesitated.

The offer was by no means attractive to her, and she would have much preferred that her aunt should have introduced her to the beauties of her new home rather than Mr. Heyton; but his intention was evidently to be civil to her, and it was just as well not to behave in any way that could be construed as churlish by her new acquaintance. She therefore expressed her thanks and agreed to his proposition.

'The gardens are in this direction,' he said, pursuing the path by which he had already come; 'they were placed at some little distance from the Castle for the accommodation of its previous tenant, who' (here a cynical smile came over his face) 'was afflicted with hallucinations.'

'But I thought I saw the gardens on the right as we drove up this morning,' remarked Ella, not a little surprised.

'The public gardens, yes; they of course can be seen by anybody. It is only, however, His Highness and the members of his suite who have access to these I shall have the honour to show you. They are unique in their way. There is the wall that surrounds them; pretty tallish, you will observe, so that De Lunatico, as I will call him——'

'Call who?' inquired Ella, surprised out of her grammar, for the secretary's tone had been so significantly sly that she could hardly resist the conviction that he was referring to his employer.

'Well, let us say, the last tenant of the Castle,' was the cool reply; 'he was put in an asylum at last, you know, but in the meanwhile they tried rest and seclusion, which only made him worse; it does in some cases.'

And Mr. Heyton turned his twinkling eyes as though they had flashed from a dark lantern, full upon Ella's face. She had no doubt in her own mind that he was experimentalising upon her; trying to see how far her faith extended with regard to the pretensions of her host, or perhaps seeking to entrap her into an expression of incredulity.

'I never heard that they had that effect,' she answered with an indifferent air.

Mr. Heyton gave a short little laugh, which said as plainly as laugh could speak, 'Dear me, how cautious we are!' and opened the garden door.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THRUST AND PARRY.

THE High Garden (as it was called) at Barton, though on an elevated spot as its name implied, was considerably lower than the ground about it; it was like a large circular pond, which, instead of water, contained beds of beautiful flowers. These were arranged



in the modern style, in masses of red, white, and blue, and had a charming effect. A terrace ran round the whole, from which walks descended at right angles, and crossed the garden in prim and formal fashion, so that it almost resembled a figure in Euclid. The air, shut in and warmed by the high walls, was heavy with scent, and very still; except for the murmurous hum of bees there was not a sound to be heard; and the flag on the Castle tower was the only object from the outside world that intruded itself. On one of the terraces were two gardeners at work, whom Ella was more pleased to see than she would have liked to have owned to herself; if she had known the place had been so retired, she would certainly not have accepted Mr. Heyton's invitation to explore it; there was something of familiarity in his manner, which she had not at first observed, which annoyed her. 'This is our little Paradise,' he said, 'wherein, not choosing to take our walks abroad, like other people, we take our pleasure, and fancy ourselves monarchs of all we survey.'

The reference to His Highness was manifest, but Ella was resolved to ignore all such allusions.

'I don't wonder at such a spot being a favourite with you, or indeed with anybody,' was her guarded reply. 'I suppose,' she added, pointing to the southern corner, where a number of glass-roofed buildings twinkled in the sun, 'those are the greenhouses.'

'What made you think that,' he inquired quickly.

'What else can they be?' she answered with surprise.

'True, it was a very natural supposition. No; they are orchard-houses. I will take you through them.'

'Thank you, I had rather not,' said Ella, quietly; 'I dislike the heat of such places.'

She began to entertain a vague apprehension of her companion; his tone was not actually rude, but it fell little short of it. It was the manner of a superior to an inferior; very different, however, from that which His Highness exhibited. If he had been presuming upon their disparity of years, treating her as if she had been a mere child, she could easily have borne it; but the feeling of resentment she experienced was too strong to have arisen from such a cause; she felt a dread she had never felt before, that this man might say something impertinent to her, and she was more than ever thankful for the presence of the gardeners.

'You dislike heat, do you?' he answered; 'so do I. The worst of this place is, that it has no shade. That door on the north terrace opens into the pine-wood; on the hottest day it is always cool there.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes; and what is very curious, if but a very little wind is blowing—as to-day, for instance—the fir-trees make just the same music as the distant murmur of the sea. Should you like to hear it?'

'No; at least not now. I must be going indoors, as my aunt will wonder what has become of me.'



‘Oh! Miss Burt is your aunt, is she?’

The colour rushed into Ella’s face; she felt the blood coursing through all her veins, and also a pang of shame.

This man then had—or would, at all events, imagine he had—caught her out in an act of duplicity. It had not struck her at the moment that the fact of her relationship to Miss Burt had not been disclosed to Mr. Heyton.

‘Yes; Miss Burt is my aunt, sir.’

‘Then your grandmother must have married twice,’ remarked her companion coolly; ‘since your mother’s name was Vallance.’

‘You seem to have possessed yourself of a great deal of information about my family,’ said Ella with a faint smile. She did not know what harm she might have done by the admission she had just been led into; but as a punishment for her own want of caution, as much as to avoid further mischief, she resolved, if possible, that she would have no quarrel with this man.

‘Anything that concerns you, Miss Josceline, must naturally be of interest to other people,’ he said with his outspread hand upon his breast, as though it had been an order. ‘But in this instance I can hardly claim for myself the knowledge of your ancestry. His Highness himself was my informant. It is the one business of his life to keep himself informed concerning the birth and parentage of every member of the British aristocracy, to which, you know, you belong.’ And again he chuckled to himself even more significantly than before. Again Ella felt her face flush, and this time with indignation. What, to her sensitive ears, the chuckle seemed to imply, was the incongruity between her station as regarded birth, and her present condition—which was certainly humble enough. And yet something told her that it was no part of her companion’s intention to insult her, but rather to remind her (perhaps for her own good, since it could hardly be for his) of her position in their common patron’s establishment.

‘I sometimes wonder,’ he went on, with that old touch of cynical humour in his tone, ‘whether His Highness’s solicitude about such matters is merely an abnormal development of a natural devotion to the peerage, or whether it has a more personal origin.’

‘What do you mean?’ inquired Ella; not that she cared what he meant, but because she was anxious to turn the conversation from the discussion of her own affairs.

‘Well, you see, His Highness has great hopes; and just as the Pope is said to file a list of all our Church endowments against the day we all become Catholics again, so he keeps account of all the nobility that will one day—perhaps—acknowledge their allegiance to him.’

He uttered the word ‘perhaps’ in such a tone of contempt (the garden walls fairly echoed to it) that Ella could not forbear saying, ‘You do not seem to think very highly of His Highness’s claims, Mr. Heyton?’

‘His claims? Miss Josceline, you astonish me!’ exclaimed the other, with well-affected indignation; ‘when have I said one word that could authorise—I mean, encourage you—to make such an observation? I was alluding—solely—to the unlikelihood of their receiving any public acknowledgment. At present, no one save you and me, who are in his confidence, and about his person, and perhaps half-a-dozen others, are so much as aware of their existence. It is necessary in these days for one who would attain any kind of eminence to be extensively advertised. If the distinguished personage whom we have in our minds would go about in a coach-and-six, with a French horn (to give the affair a Court-of-Versailles flavour), he would invite perhaps enough of believers to form a party. The other Claimant—I mean the Tichborne—has done it even with a van and drums; but here we live, not indeed “a violet by the mossy stone half-hidden from the eye,” but in solitary state, without so much as a weekly organ to advocate our rights. I wish we had one. By Jingo, I should like to edit it,’ grinned the little man. ‘And I tell you where we have made another omission,’ he continued, obviously with great enjoyment of his own humorous conceit: ‘we ought to belong to the old religion. That is the only genuine article for the last of the Stuarts. Without a father confessor the whole affair is incomplete. We ought to have masses twice a day or so, for the repose of our great-great-grandfather’s soul.’

Under other circumstances Ella might have been unable to restrain a smile at these suggestions; but when she called to mind the relation of the man who made them to the object of his satire, and how the very claims he scoffed at procured his daily bread, she blushed for shame. ‘Is it possible, Mr. Heyton, that you can thus turn into ridicule pretensions from which you yourself’—she hesitated, then added—‘and indeed all of us, derive advantage?’

‘Oh, then, you believe in them, do you?’ returned he, sharply; ‘now, that is very satisfactory. I was afraid—that is I thought it possible—not, of course, that I took you for a sceptic, but that just at first the notion of a new claimant to the throne of England—the last of all the Stuarts—might have been—dear me—a little——’

It is impossible to reproduce the provoking way in which Mr. Heyton hung and hesitated upon every word, waiting, as it seemed, for her to interpose with some expression of incredulity or doubt.

‘I did not say, Mr. Heyton, that I believed in the claims at which you have hinted; I have never said so.’

‘Not in words,’ he put in quickly; ‘but surely, at least on one occasion, you have admitted them by tacit consent.’

She knew, of course, that he was referring to her late interview with their common patron, and for the third time the tell-tale colour came into her cheeks. The taunt, if not wholly undeserved, was most disingenuous, and, in the mouth of him who spoke it, in the worst taste.

‘You are mistaken, sir,’ she said. ‘His Highness will tell

you, if you choose to ask him, that I came here absolutely ignorant of his position, almost of his existence.'

'Just so,' replied the secretary with a sly smile, that contrasted provokingly with the seriousness of his tone. 'It is the suddenness of your conversion that makes it, as I have said, so eminently satisfactory. Now your aunt—for she is your aunt, it seems—was very incredulous; it took her, I believe, several days to be convinced that her principle could be reconciled with her interest.'

'At all events,' said Ella coldly, 'neither my aunt nor I could turn into ridicule, as you have done, our common benefactor.'

'As *I* have done!' echoed Mr. Heyton, in a tone of amazement. 'Did anyone (he looked appealingly towards the two gardeners who were, however, well out of earshot) ever hear the like? *I* ridicule our common benefactor? Heaven forbid! Welcome death rather than such dishonour. I may have seemed to make an innocent jest of His Highness's pretensions; but, my dear young lady, has not Coleridge himself (a philosopher one immensely admires) asserted that a man cannot be said to believe in a religion unless he can afford to laugh at it—that is, to see its weak points. Now, in His Highness's claims there are—it must be confessed, in the St. Rosalie part of it, for example—just one or two weak points; though the whole chain of evidence, taken as a whole, is most conclusive and irrefragable.'

'Of course, if His Highness is aware not only of the stability of your convictions, Mr. Heyton, but of the means you adopt, after Coleridge, to prove it, that is another matter.'

The secretary's beady eyes flashed out a quick, suspicious glance, as though he would have said, 'I wonder, now, whether she is in jest or earnest?' Then he answered very slowly and distinctly, 'His Highness knows me so well, Miss Josceline, that I am quite sure, if a slanderous tongue should hint anything to the discredit of my fealty, he would treat the accusation with contempt, and also'—here his tone grew even more deliberate—'I, on my part, have some little knowledge of His Highness. If I thought his ear was in danger of being abused by anybody, I should take such steps as would at once and for ever remove that individual from about his person. He, or she—for I should do my duty, even if it were one of the gentler sex—would no longer have to complain of imprisonment in Barton Castle.'

'Imprisonment! why imprisonment?' inquired Ella; she felt a certain mischievous pleasure in the alarm she had evidently excited, which caused her to assume an air of indifference. Her companion, on the other hand, as if he had read her thoughts, and regretted the hint of menace with which he had been betrayed, at once adopted the same tone.

'Is it possible you did not know the conditions on which we live here?' he answered lightly. 'That the members of His Highness's household are all prisoners on parole? Now, dear me, that is very curious.'

‘I know nothing about it, Mr. Heyton.’

‘But surely you must have guessed. How was it, for instance, that ever since you were at Wallington Bay, you never saw your aunt, think you?’

‘To be sure, that ought to have struck me,’ said Ella, looking down, and stirring the gravel with her foot, but conscious that the secretary’s eyes were looking her through and through.

‘It is true, there may have been some reason,’ he continued, ‘best known to yourself, for that; but in the case of the other tenants of the Castle—of myself, for example—I should have thought it would have occurred to you as curious that we remained invisible.’

‘True; if I had known of your existence it might have done so no doubt,’ admitted Ella.

The secretary bit his lip. He felt that this young woman was at least as impervious to coercion as to patronage. ‘Well, well, at all events, such is the fact,’ he said, with a touch of peevishness; ‘it is understood that we do not leave the Castle without leave. At the same time, my dear young lady,’ he added earnestly, ‘if you should ever wish to exercise that privilege, a word from me to His Highness—— Talk of the devil—I mean an angel, and you hear the rustle of his wings. Here he comes, and with those infernal dogs. They always fly at me, and nobody else, as if I were a wild beast.’

The remark was evoked by the appearance of His Highness at the garden door, through which, at the same moment, rushed a couple of gigantic deerhounds, who came racing down the gravel walk towards the secretary—as though he had been a stag of ten which they had just started. There, however, the parallel ended: the secretary, in the absence of antlers, or even an umbrella, had no intention of showing fight, but was manifestly in a state of extreme perturbation. Ella would, perhaps, have shared his apprehensions on her own account had not Mr. Heyton already complained to her that he alone was the object of the dogs’ animosity. As matters were, she was getting seriously alarmed for his personal safety, when suddenly a shrill call was blown from a silver whistle, and ‘Turk’ and ‘Jasper,’ without checking for an instant their headlong career, swirled round like greyhounds who have turned a hare, and flew back to meet their master, who with slow and stately steps was coming down the walk.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH HIS HIGHNESS.

So soon as the secretary perceived His Highness’s intention of coming towards them, he raised his hat, as though they were meeting for the first time that morning—a salutation which the



other acknowledged by placing his forefinger on his forehead after the manner of the great Duke of Wellington. In the strong sunlight the calm dignity of his face impressed Ella even more than it had done in his own room; but on this occasion, though he gave her a grave smile, she fancied there was some trace of displeasure in it. Was it possible, she wondered, that he looked upon her presence in his private garden as an intrusion? Some notion of the same kind seemed to have occurred to Mr. Heyton, since, in rather an apologetic tone, he observed, 'I was doing myself the pleasure of acting as cicerone to Miss Josceline about the castle grounds.'

'A very efficient one, no doubt,' returned the other, without, however, looking towards the secretary; his eyes were fixed on Ella, but with a certain kindly gravity that divested the directness of his gaze of any rudeness. 'Have you seen the orchard-houses? Then let me show them you.'

He did not wait for any expression of acquiescence, but walked on side by side with her, with the secretary a foot or two behind them, doubtless, as Ella pictured him to herself, with a cynical smile, for had she not just admitted to him that the atmosphere of orchard-houses was not to her taste. As for His Highness, however, he could not have shown himself more unconscious of the secretary's presence if 'Jasper' or 'Turk' had swallowed him, which, to judge by their sniffs and growls about his heels, they had still some hankering to do.

'A predecessor of mine at Barton—Lady Bruce—was delicate, and recommended to try Madeira.' His Highness spoke with such deliberation that Ella, thinking she was expected to say something, was on the point of saying that she pitied her ladyship, since Madeira was to her own taste very distasteful, but she fortunately stopped herself in time; it was not the liquor, as it turned out, but the island which had been prescribed. 'She shrunk, however, from the sea voyage,' continued His Highness; 'whereupon her husband said he would bring Madeira for her to England, and so he built her this.'

The orchard-house, indeed, was a conservatory of immense length, though neither very broad nor very high, in which an invalid might take a good deal of exercise in a genial atmosphere and among very pleasant surroundings. The air of the place, though far from oppressive in the sense of heat, was heavy with fragrance from every kind of flower, for the term 'orchard' applied only to one part of it where 'drooped the heavy-fruited trees;' the rest was bright with colour, except where, on the shady or wall side, great clusters of white camellias contrasted with it. It was thence, no doubt, thought Ella, that the flowers had come which she had found upon her father's grave. Her host noticed her glance at them.

'Are you fond of camellias?' he said.

'I think they are the most beautiful of all flowers,' she



answered; 'though, as generally happens with very beautiful people, the soul—fragrance—is wanting to them.'

'That is not always the case,' answered His Highness with a look of grave admiration that rather disconcerted his companion. 'There have been women, such as Flora Macdonald, for example—St. Flora, as we call her at Barton—who have combined the charms of mind and body.'

The peculiarity of the phrase, 'as we call her at Barton,' of course attracted Ella's attention; but she was only partly right in setting it down to her host's partiality for the House of Stuart; it was also a sort of tentative experiment. It was his custom with Miss Burt and the secretary to speak of himself in royal phrase as 'we,' and the words 'at Barton' were put in to prevent Ella from experiencing, and perhaps expressing, a very natural astonishment.

'Was Flora Macdonald really so very beautiful, sir?'

'You shall see her presently in the picture gallery,' he answered, 'and judge for yourself. I used to think her,' he added with just sufficient emphasis to give his speech significance, 'the most spiritual-looking of all women. I am pleased to find you are so fond of camellias, Miss Josceline; do you know why?'

Ella did not reply. Compliments, however high-flown, and therefore meaningless, were not to her taste, and she already felt a little embarrassed; perhaps he was now going to say 'because he could supply her with camellias for her hair.'

'Well,' he continued, 'it is for what you will consider a very sentimental reason.' She was more apprehensive of what was coming than ever; but, as it happened, her fears were groundless. His Highness had mounted his hobby. 'The reason is, that they were the poor Cardinal's favourite flower.'

Ella answered 'Indeed!' and threw into the word as much of mournful interest as under the circumstances was possible. She had not the remotest idea to what cardinal he was referring, nor why he should have called him poor. Her impression was that cardinals were pretty well provided for.

'Yes; in my revered relative's time the flower was a comparative novelty; but while he was in a position to do so, his Eminence filled his house with them.'

Here her companion sighed, and walked on for some moments in silence. The picture he was doubtless making in his mind of a cardinal who could not afford camellias appeared to overcome him.

'It is a lovely afternoon,' said he presently, with the manner of one who is making an effort—and an unaccustomed one—to please; 'the view from the pine-wood will be charming. But perhaps you have had enough of walking, Miss Josceline?'

'I am only afraid, sir, that my aunt, who does not know of my being out, will be alarmed at my absence.'

'Did you come here, then,' answered her companion, in a cold and, as she thought, a somewhat displeased tone, 'at Mr. Heyton's

invitation?' The gentleman alluded to was fortunately at some distance, eating peaches.

'I met Mr. Heyton in the park, sir, as I was returning from the churchyard, and——'

'To be sure, to be sure,' interrupted the other gently. 'He brought you here to divert your thoughts. I hope, Miss Josceline, that you found everything in that sacred spot befitting, and—and—as it should be?'

'I found, sir, that some kind hand—I do not know whose hand—but if it was yours I thank you—had placed——'

'I gave orders to the gardener, yes,' put in her companion, waiving away her thanks with a stately gesture. 'But, alas! how little it is that we can do for the dead! My ancestors, who were of the old faith, were happier in that respect; those who went before them did not seem so altogether out of reach. Mr. Heyton, you need attend us no longer. We will ourselves show Miss Josceline over the picture gallery.'

The secretary inclined his head, partly in reverence, and partly to conceal the fact that he had half a peach in his mouth; and it was just as well he did so, since it gave him the appearance—by no means contradicted by the cynical expression of his face—of putting his tongue in his cheek. If Ella did not know all the thoughts that were passing through that gentleman's mind, she guessed some of them. She had a suspicion, for one thing, that he was smarting under a sense of humiliation; and though it was not her fault that his self-imposed office of cicerone was taken from him, and it must be confessed in a somewhat cavalier manner, she turned round and gave him a parting bow of thanks. He returned it with studious respect, and for once without that movement of the hand to the heart which was so habitual to him: his master's eye was on him.

'Heyton is a good creature,' remarked His Highness, as they left the conservatory, patting 'Jasper' on the head as he spoke, as though he would have extended the compliment to that faithful animal.

The authority exercised by her singular host interested Ella exceedingly, and much more than if it had been genuine. His airs of superiority, though she believed them utterly unfounded, did not excite her ridicule. They were evidently the result of an honest fanaticism such as a good Jacobite might have entertained for a real Pretender. His kindness touched her, for it was evident that the manifestation of it cost him something in a supposed loss of dignity. That characteristic touch, 'I gave orders to the gardener,' when an act of personal respect had been imputed to him, did not annoy her, because she already began to understand him. As they walked homeward together without a word, she even imagined that she recognised the reason of his silence. The reference to his ancestors had turned his thoughts into that well-worn and monopolising channel.

They entered the castle by a private door; not that by which Ella had left it, but one that was used by His Highness only. Leaving the reception-room on the left, he led the way into a high-roofed chamber of no very large dimensions, and which the few portraits on the walls hardly entitled to be called a gallery; so, however, it was termed at Barton, where imposing names made up for a somewhat miniature state of things.

'That is the Cardinal,' sighed His Highness, pointing to a picture of an ecclesiastic in scarlet. The face was delicate almost to effeminacy, the mouth weak and indecisive, the eyes gentle, the whole expression amiability personified.

'Is he not every inch a prince of the Church?'

If it were so, the Church was certainly not a Church militant.

'There is a sweet expression in the face,' said Ella, not quite knowing what to say of a gentleman obviously as meek as a mouse.

'True; yet his brother writes of Henry Benedict Maria Clement, "He does not much love to be contradicted."'

'Indeed!' said Ella, thinking to herself what appropriate names Clement and the feminine Maria must have been for him.

From a niche in the side of the picture her companion took down a medal. 'When my great-grandfather died,' he said, 'the Cardinal, in ignorance of my grandfather's birth, had this medal struck: "*Henricus Nonus, Angliæ Rex*," on the one side, and "*Dei gratiâ sed non voluntate hominum*" on the other; an inscription to me, as you may imagine, inexpressibly touching. I have always pitied him from the bottom of my heart, although (unconsciously) he did me great damage.'

'You mean by having the medal struck?' hesitated Ella. She was evidently expected to say something, which sorely perplexed her; for was it right, she asked herself, to encourage her companion in his hallucinations by exhibiting an interest in such a matter, even though she really felt it? On the other hand, she remembered that her aunt had said it was not possible for any human being to shake her host's confidence in his own pretensions, or to augment it.

'Why, yes; the medal, of course, was a material wrong, since it ignored my grandfather's existence. Then at his death his bequest of the crown jewels, including even the George of the Royal Martyr, to George IV., was an indefensible act, since they were not his to dispose of, but his nephew's. As I have said, however, I have nothing but commiseration for him; he had a generous heart. He gave his ruby—the largest and most perfect in Europe—to help the Pope to defray the exactions of Napoleon; yet the French stripped him of all that he had. Infirm and destitute, this last-but-one descendant of a long line of kings was constrained to become a pensioner upon his rival's bounty. He had 4,000*l.* a year from George III. until his death; scarcely enough, poor fellow!' concluded His Highness, with a grave

smile, 'To keep him in camellias. There, that's St. Flora,' he continued in a lighter tone, and pointing to the portrait of a young girl not beautiful, and of short stature, but with an expression of face that curiously combined determination with tenderness. 'There is our patron saint, taken from the life.'

'She was not a Catholic herself, I think?' observed Ella, regarding the portrait with intentness and an interest she was compelled to feel in spite of herself.

'Upon my word, I don't know,' answered her companion frankly. 'I do not remember to have heard it mentioned. The Prince himself was not much concerned on such points.'

Perhaps nothing was more convincing and illustrative of His Highness's confidence in his own pretensions than this cold-blooded reply, which embodied in a sentence all the Stuart selfishness and want of feeling. A kind-hearted man himself, he seemed positively to stoop to emulate their egotism, in order that the doctrine of heredity might gain a new example. As if sensible, however, that his words had made a bad impression on his companion, he produced a note-case, and taking reverently from it a slip of paper, kissed it with every mark of affection and respect. 'This is the famous letter,' he said, 'of Flora's step-father, recommending her mother to take Betty Burke into her service. You remember who Betty Burke was?'

Unhappily Ella did not remember. His Highness looked at her as a bishop might regard a young woman come to him for confirmation who showed an ignorance of the Commandments. 'Read it,' he said, imperiously.

*'I have sent your daughter from this country, least (the spelling was peculiar) she should be any way frightened by the troops lying here. She has got one Betty Burke, an Irish girl, who, as she tells me, is a good spinster. If her spinning pleases you, you may keep her till she spins all her lint; or, if you have any more to spin, you may employ her. I have sent Neil Makechan along with your daughter and Betty Burke, to take care of them. I am your dutiful husband,*

*'HUGH MACDONALD.'*

'Well, now you know who Betty Burke was?'

'Yes,' said Ella, patiently; 'she was, of course, the Pre——' (her good star just saved her from saying the Pretender)—'Prince Charlie, in disguise. I remember it all now, even to Flora's "farewell."'

'Can you sing "the Farewell"?' inquired His Highness, eagerly. 'Oh, pray do!'

'Well, really, without accompaniment, I doubt it,' hesitated Ella. As it happened, Scotch songs were her forte; but the situation, even for a practised singer, was embarrassing.

'You have the letter in your hand,' he said, 'which should be an inspiration. Come.'



Far over yon hills of the heather so green,  
 And down by the corrie that sings to the sea,  
 The bonny young Flora sat singing her lane ;  
 The dew on her plaid and the tear in her e'e.  
 She looked at a boat with the breezes that swung  
 Away on the wave like a bird on the main ;  
 And aye as it lessened she sighed and she sung,  
 Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again,  
 Farewell to my hero, the gallant and young,  
 Farewell to the lad I shall ne'er see again.

Ella sang well, and with feeling ; the room was well suited to her voice, and the pictures that hung about it imparted a curious sense of association and appropriateness. Her companion listened with rapt attention, keeping time to the tune with a slight movement of his fingers. When she had finished, she perceived with astonishment and some alarm that the tears were stealing down his cheeks. He brushed them away deliberately enough with his hand. 'Miss Josceline,' he said earnestly, 'you have laid me under a great obligation. It is the habit of our race to be easily moved, but I have rarely exhibited such weakness.'

He turned to the next picture as if to change the subject : it showed a beautiful woman, very young, but with a certain proud disdain in her face. 'That is my great-grandmother, the Princess Louisa of Stolberg. You remember Alfieri's lines upon her :—

Her mouth no rosebud, and no rose her cheek,  
 May emulate in freshness, fragrance, hue ;  
 A voice so soft and sweet, to hear her speak,  
 Inspires delight and pleasures ever new.

It was a most unhappy marriage.'

Ella did not know how unhappy it had been, and what had followed upon it, but fortunately made no inquiry ; the subject was evidently a painful one to her companion.

'I see one picture with its face to the wall,' said she ; 'what is the reason of that ?'

Her companion approached the picture and turned it, disclosing a full-length portrait of a man richly dressed and of distinguished appearance. 'That is the Judas of the Stuarts,' he said, 'the Prince's secretary ; not Mr. Heyton, you know,' he added, smiling, 'but John Murray of Broughton. Do you remember, when Sir John Douglas was brought before the Privy Council and confronted with him, what he said ? "Do you know this witness ?" they inquired. "Not I," he answered. "I once knew a person called Murray of Broughton, but that was a gentleman and man of honour."'

'I remember him now,' said Ella, 'and what Lockhart tells of him. How he used to consult Walter Scott's father by night, and thereby excited Mrs. Scott's curiosity ; and how she once offered him a cup of coffee which her husband threw out of window after he had used it, saying, "Neither lips of me nor mine come after Mr. Murray of Broughton."'



‘A noble speech,’ remarked His Highness, ‘and a noble mind,’ he added, with grave admiration, ‘that treasures such a speech in its memory. I cannot but look upon it, Miss Josceline, as a happy chance that led you to accept the hospitality of Barton.’ Then, perceiving that the compliment, or rather the earnestness with which it was spoken, embarrassed her, he added more lightly, ‘The rest of the pictures we will examine another day at our leisure, Miss Josceline; I am afraid your aunt may be alarmed at your absence.’

It was not without some sense of relief that Ella found herself in her own room. The manner of the last of the Stuarts, though perfectly respectful, had, towards the close of the interview, certainly become *empressé*. She would have been still more struck with his attentions if she had noticed the fact, or rather been aware of its significance, that when she left the picture gallery he had so far forgotten his exalted position as to open the door for her.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### MONEY EARNED.

ONE of the many advantages which conventional persons possess over those who are more natural, or less easily schooled, is that they are almost always satisfied with their own conduct. The groove of respectability and outward seeming in which they move is so deep that they hardly ever ‘run off the rails.’ Their sorrow and their mirth are both of a superficial kind; but, such as they are, they are at their own disposal, and they can ‘laugh with those that laugh,’ and ‘weep with those that weep’ without difficulty or an effort. Propriety and the sense of decorum always keep their hold on them; they never laugh when they ought to weep, or *vice versâ*, for their self-consciousness reminds them of times and seasons and of the fitness of things. With the poor creatures of impulse it is different; they allow themselves to give way to natural emotion without due consideration of the circumstances, and repent at leisure of the unbecoming weaknesses into which haste and want of reflection have betrayed them.

This was the case with Ella Josceline, when, in the solitude of her room, she reviewed the events of the day and her own conduct; she had within the space of a few hours allowed herself to be vexed, interested, and then vexed again, with the behaviour of strangers. She had found herself speculating upon their devices, their private affairs, their intentions, with a certain amount of interest in them; and yet it was only one short week since she had lost her father and found the first record of her dead mother! The very thought that it was really the best thing for her that

she should, as far as possible, forget the past and concern herself with the present and the future, only aggravated her remorse. She accused herself of being not only unfeeling, but selfish and self-seeking; and shed such bitter tears as the ordinary miserable sinner—unless with the object of mitigating his sentence—would hardly drop for a murder done. So occupied was she with these penitential thoughts that she did not notice her aunt's entrance into the room with a letter in her hand.

'My darling, I am sorry to see you thus,' she said tenderly, but also with a certain touch of reproach. 'I had hoped you were too sensible as well as too good——'

'Good!' cried Ella passionately; 'I am not good, but bad and selfish, and wicked.'

'That is sad news, indeed,' returned Aunt Hester quietly 'for if you are all that, my dear, what must the rest of the world be?'

It is very seldom that any one has the courage to use this argument of comparison; but as a moral styptic, applied to those who are neither fools nor knaves, it is invaluable. It is one of the few instances in which comparisons are not only not odious, but eminently useful. An individual endowed with spiritual pride would have gone on pretending that she was the basest of mortals; but Ella was neither a hypocrite nor a self-deceiver, and at once perceived that she had been indulging in morbid self-depreciation.

'At all events,' she replied, wiping her eyes, 'I am very much ashamed of myself, and have good cause to be;' and, without waiting for her aunt to cross-examine her, she told her why—that is to say, the whole story of what had taken place that afternoon in connection both with the secretary and His Highness.

Aunt Hester listened to it, and especially to the latter portion of it, with the greatest interest and attention.

'I don't see what you have to reproach yourself with, my dear,' she said, 'in having behaved with courtesy and naturalness. For whatever reason the death of those we love is permitted to happen, it cannot be in order to unfit us for the duties of life. Otherwise your father would have been spared to you—I mean,' she added hastily, 'if he had lived there would have been no such need for you to concern yourself in material matters, with things and people about you, as now exists. Providence itself, as it seems to me, has called you into a new and active sphere of existence; and it is not only "no use," but an act of insubordination and defiance, to fight against it. You are the best judge, Ella, of what your father would have wished; but, as for your dear mother, I am sure she would have been grieved to know you spend your time in vain regrets.'

If Aunt Hester, instead of being one of the simplest and most straightforward of mortals, had been one of the most artful and

diplomatic, she could not have urged a more powerful argument than these words conveyed. For if she could thus answer for Ella's mother, Ella herself had certainly no doubt of the view her father would have taken on the matter in question.

'But it seems so soon,' she faintly urged, 'to interest oneself in worldly matters.'

'That is because, my dear,' returned her companion smiling, 'you have been brought up such a fine lady. I have suffered in my time, believe me; but the luxury of grief—the unctuous satisfaction of shutting oneself up and indulging in it without regard for one's fellow-creatures—has been denied me. I have always had to work for myself, and therefore, indirectly, for *them*; and I am inclined to think that is what we are sent into the world to do. "Let the dead bury their dead," depend upon it, was said not only for the benefit of those who happened to hear it, but for future generations. This moral lecture (as sometimes happens),' she added in a lighter tone, 'has caused me, by-the-bye, to forget what may be of importance. Here is a letter for you, my dear; and likewise something by the book post.'

'For *me*?' Ella took up the letter with no great interest, for the address was strange to her, but without the weariness which she would have manifested a few minutes ago. Aunt Hester's words had done her good. The letter she had brought her seemed also to do her good, to judge by the light that kindled in her eyes as she perused it.

'Dear Miss Josceline,—I venture to forward you a letter with enclosure, which Vernon has received from Messrs. Pater & Son, the publishers of the "*Mayfair Keepsake*." He himself shrinks from doing this; but, as I tell him, I cannot but think you would be gratified at the receipt of such a communication. The labourer, as we were wont to agree, you know, is worthy of his hire. As to the wood blocks of which mention is made, they can be procured at Bearward's in the Strand; and if you mention my name, and what they are wanted for, a letter from you will receive from them immediate attention and some good advice. I fear, however, you will want a teacher at your elbow just at first. Your departure has been the signal for flight for most of the company at the *Ultramarine*—not including, however, Mr. Aird and Davey. I have only to add that if Vernon or myself can be of the least use to you with Messrs. Pater, or in any other matter, it will give us the greatest pleasure.

'Yours faithfully,  
'MICHAEL FELSPAR.'

The accompanying letter ran as follows:—

'Dear Mr. Vernon,—We think the "*Italian Boy*" a charming little picture, and that it weds with your poem most appropriately. Since the artist is unknown, she will, no doubt, be glad to work on reasonable terms. We enclose a cheque for a couple of guineas

for what she has done for us, and should like to hear from her with regard to future illustrations. It is a great pity she does not draw on the wood, which would save both her and us the middle-man's expenses.

Yours very truly,  
'PATER AND SON.'

In her surprise, and also because she felt she should have no secrets from her kind relative, Ella read both letters aloud.

'What does it mean? What does it all mean?' inquired Aunt Hester. 'Why do Messrs. Pater and Son send you two guineas?'

'Oh! because of *this*,' replied Ella modestly, and exhibiting the copy of the 'Keepsake' which had arrived with the letters; 'in payment for this little picture which I did for them in illustration of Mr. Vernon's poem.'

'You did that? *You?*' exclaimed Aunt Hester admiringly. 'What a clever creature you must be, darling! Why, it's as like as life; and the organ too.'

'You mean the boy is as like a real boy as the hurdy-gurdy is like an organ,' said Ella laughing. 'However, I hope to improve in time, and I am sure these gentlemen have paid me very handsomely.'

'What! you call two guineas handsome for such a picture? I should have said twenty or thirty would have been a fair price,' protested Aunt Hester. 'However, I suppose Mr. Felspar knows what he is about, and will not let you be imposed upon. So far as he is concerned, the letter is most satisfactory, I'm sure.'

'It is most satisfactory every way, Aunt Hester,' answered Ella, looking at the cheque in her hand as a connoisseur regards a picture.

The light in which it looked best, we may be sure, was as a pledge and foretaste of independence. Next to the first kiss of love, is the delight of the first money one makes by one's own exertions. It is not only the reward of labour and the promise of subsistence, but the assurance that we have found our place in the world, or, at all events, the road to it. It is almost the only pure delight, save that of assisting others, which gold can confer.

Up to that date there were few human beings into whose minds the idea of money-getting had less intruded than into Ella Josceline's. All calculations for her material future had hitherto been made for her by another; but now—now that she was alone in the world and bereft of means, and a responsibility (to say the least of it) to her only relative (who was herself, too, in a position of dependence)—that cheque from Messrs. Pater and Son was as the first leaf in the Book of Hope. To a man of business it would have seemed like folly indeed (though if he had a heart it would have been pitiful enough) to see the little multiplication sum (I say multiplication, for, having been educated at a fashionable seminary, she had never been taught

the rule of three) which on the instant forefigured itself as on a lecture-board, or let us say, a pure white ivory tablet, on Ella's mind. If a picture which had taken her half a day produced two guineas, how much a year would she make by drawing every 'lawful day'? She knew nothing of the laws of supply and demand, but she was not so simple as not to allow something for contingencies; yet, with every drawback, what a competence awaited her! An income not only sufficient for herself, but which should provide a home, with all its comforts, for Aunt Hester.

Breaking into this golden dream—which did not, however, entirely monopolise her thoughts—came the matter-of-fact tones of her aunt. 'But if the verses you illustrated were Mr. Vernon's, my dear, how is it that Mr. Felspar writes to you, and not Mr. Vernon?'

This had been the very question which Ella had been putting to herself all the time, and which had even mixed itself up with the product of her multiplication sum. She answered, however, pretty readily, that the reason given by Mr. Felspar for his friend's not writing was no doubt the correct one; namely, that Mr. Vernon felt a delicacy in intruding mere material matters upon her while her sorrow was so green and tender.

'Then Mr. Felspar the painter, I suppose,' observed Aunt Hester, 'is a more common sense and practical man than Mr. Vernon the poet?'

The question in its simplicity and directness was characteristic enough of the speaker, yet it seemed to affect her companion with some surprise and even annoyance.

'I don't know why you should say that, Aunt Hester,' she replied quickly. 'Mr. Felspar was so good as to give me a lesson or two in drawing, and that no doubt entitles him to offer advice on the matter in question; but Mr. Vernon first suggested the picture itself.'

'At all events,' said Aunt Hester slyly, 'I see that it is the poet who is the favourite. Nay, you must not pout, my darling: the tongues of "faithful retainers," and especially of housekeepers, you know, are always privileged. Now I shall leave you to digest your correspondence for a little, since I am sure there will be food enough for thought in it.'

Aunt Hester was right there, and that Parthian shaft she had let fly at a venture, 'I see that it is the poet who is the favourite,' had also food for thought in it. Whether Ella was right or not to think of matters of this world, it certainly caused her to do so. The presumption is, she was wrong, and was ashamed of herself, or why should she have been one blush from brow to chin?



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## A RESOLUTION.

So very much disturbed had Ella been by her aunt's parting observations that it escaped her notice that that lady had taken away the 'Mayfair Keepsake' with her—a sign of perturbation of mind with her indeed. For what young author, or artist, does not love to pore over his first production in print or paper; not the mere proof-sheet (though *that* is Heaven) which is, as it were, one's idea in its dressing gown, but stitched and hot-pressed with its cover on, the garb in which it invites the public to the book-stall? Neglecting, I say, the disappearance of this sixpennyworth of rapture, Ella sat, with Mr. Felspar's letter before her, reading about Mr. Vernon 'shrinking from' intruding upon her. Aunt Hester's query why had not Mr. Vernon written instead of Mr. Felspar? was indeed a very pertinent one. The letter from the publishers had been addressed to Mr. Vernon, not to him; and yet it was Mr. Felspar who had forwarded it, and Mr. Felspar who had written. Perhaps Mr. Vernon's arm was still useless from the snake-bite. Her eyes wandered to the floor where lay the wrapper in which the magazine had come, and with a sudden impulse she picked it up and read the address on it. Then she folded the crumpled paper neatly up and placed it in her bosom. If she should never possess any other record of the writer than that (except the memory of him), that at least would be something; her own name written in his own hand. She had a presentiment (and it made her heart ache) that that was all she ever would have. Since he could pen a direction, he could have penned a letter. Physical inability had not, it was clear, been the cause of his having written by deputy. What, then, *was* the cause? That it was not the one assigned by Mr. Felspar was certain. Why should Mr. Vernon have feared to intrude on her recent sorrow any more than his friend? He must have known as well as Mr. Felspar—since her prospects (or rather her want of them) were known to both of them—that the forwarding of Messrs. Pater's communication, so far from being an intrusion, would be a source of inexpressible encouragement and comfort to her.

It was with a certain sinking of the heart, such as happens to poor humanity only in seasons of extreme depression or despair, that Ella recalled a conversation with her father, that had taken place on the very day when he was taken ill, upon the subject of Mr. Vernon. He had spoken of him, not unfavourably, but with

a marked disinclination to encourage any intimacy, and especially with her. He had called him 'an estimable young man in his station in life;' as though there had been some social gulf between them; 'a Bohemian' and 'not the sort of man I should wish a son of mine—and far less a daughter—to be familiar with.' And then, again, had not her father sent from his deathbed to Mr. Vernon and been closeted with him alone?—she knew not why, unless it had some reference to that unhappy scheme respecting Mr. Aird. It was terrible to think it, but Ella's impression was that on that occasion her father might have even told Mr. Vernon that she was engaged to Mr. Aird, or at all events might have purposely so offended Mr. Vernon's pride that it was impossible he could continue, or resume, their old terms of friendship. That he wished her well, she knew; but it was more than possible that he would never again hold speech with her. She even fancied there had been something of farewell in the sad and sympathetic look he wore, as she had driven by the door of Clover Cottage that morning.

A maiden (of the well-regulated type) does not own her love, she had heard, even to herself, unless the object of her affections has declared himself; and yet the bitter tears welled through her fingers as she sat with her face covered with her hands and thought upon these things. At the lowest, she felt she had been deprived of a friend at a time when she stood so sorely in need of friends, and, above all, of such as could sympathise with her. In Mr. Vernon she had found for the first time, if not 'a man after her own heart,' a man whose views (if in her undeveloped mental condition she could be said to have views) were in unison with her own, and whose calling was in harmony with her aspirations. Whether he was 'Bohemian' or not, she could not tell; the word had no exact meaning for her; but if to be independent, through one's own exertions, of the accidents of birth and fortune, and to be careless of the opinion of the world, and to be content with a little, was to be Bohemian—then she herself was gipsy to the backbone.

In Paris she had seen something of society; had been introduced (with a purpose, no doubt, of which at the time, thank Heaven, she had known nothing) to young gentlemen of fashion, the well-born and the well-to-do—all, more or less, of her father's class, though vastly inferior to him in address and wit—and they had not impressed her favourably. It had struck her, even then, that they were wanting in genuineness and good feeling; but since she had become acquainted with Mr. Felspar and Mr. Vernon, she had felt sure of this. In character, in views, in conduct, these two young men seemed the very opposites of those with whom she had hitherto mingled. In them she had first met with real gentleness and delicacy, and the refinement which springs from kindness of heart and surpasses all that French polish can bestow. It was with honest, frank, and genuine people (even though like Mrs.

Wallace, or Dr. Cooper, they might be wanting in certain artificial attributes of manner and culture) that her sympathies would have led her to attach herself in any case; but now, deprived of the 'position' on which her father had laid such stress, and dependent on her own exertions, she had no choice in the matter. The attentions of the fashionable world were, for the future, not likely to be pressed on her; she had done with it, or rather it with her; and yet, thanks to her dead father's act—so mistaken, yet so well-meaning, so cruel, yet so kind—she had lost for ever the friend who would have made up for all. 'If Vernon or myself can be of the least use to you,' Mr. Felspar had written, 'it will give us the greatest pleasure;' and she did not doubt his words, but to her sore and desolate heart they had (as regarded Vernon at least) a knell of farewell in them.

To do her justice, Ella regretted nothing in her past life that money or position had had any hand in; she reflected, without a sigh of regret, that she would no longer be courted or sought after; and yet her disposition was what, in a man, would have been termed social. She enjoyed the interchange of ideas, had a keen sense of humour, and a yearning for sympathy in the way of tastes and pursuits that was all the stronger, perhaps, since, until within the last few weeks, it had been utterly denied her. If she had had no experience of it, her feelings, she bitterly reflected, would not now be so poignant; it would have been even possible for her to look forward to some such lot in life as her Aunt Hester's without discontent, or, at all events, despair; but now she dared not contemplate it. It was not pride that forbade it—pride and the causes of it were more than ever abhorrent to her—but the sense that she was unfitted for dependence. Heaven grant, she prayed, that she might be her own mistress; then no matter whether or no she had any other servant.

Of the young, at least, it is true that 'sorrow endures for a night,' and 'joy'—or at least resolve and contentment—'cometh in the morning.' After an hour or two of dark, despairing thoughts, the clouds began to lift a little from Ella's mind. Surely if, as she had told herself, she was unfitted for dependence, she must be fit for something that would make her independent, or what right had she to be cumbering the earth at all? She gave one deep sigh, then sighed no more, but rising from her chair, put Mr. Felspar's letter carefully away in her desk, and proceeded to reply to that of Messrs. Pater and Son. After acknowledging their cheque, she expressed her willingness to undertake to the best of her ability any work which they might be so good as to entrust her with, but at the same time honestly informed them how young and inexperienced she was, and how much she stood in need of counsel. Confession may be good for the soul; but it is doubtful whether the avowal of incapacity to the parties desirous of securing our services is quite judicious. Messrs. Pater and Son were a newly-established firm, chiefly known as the proprie-

tors of the 'Mayfair Keepsake,' itself a very bantling among magazines, and they had a tendency to patronise rising geniuses, whether authors or artists, who (unlike green peas) are cheapest when very young. It is to the credit of Ella's common-sense that, on writing to Bearward's in the Strand in accordance with Mr. Felspar's recommendation, she mentioned to them the possibility of her getting employment from the 'Keepsake,' which gave them a notion of what she wanted, or they might have sent her some very fine specimens of wood blocks indeed.

It was astonishing what a change the composition and despatch of these two little business letters wrought in her. There was but little in them even of hope; but a hunger had seized her heart to be up and doing, and they were the first steps upon the road to Work—than which the Giver of all good has given us few things better worth the having.

An hour afterwards Aunt Hester returned, and found her niece poring over a large book which she had found in one of the bookshelves. From her attitude and rapt expression she took it for granted it was the Bible.

'I see you have found comfort already, my darling,' said she softly, 'from the only place where it is to be looked for. It is not here, but afar off—'

'Just so,' interrupted Ella, smiling, showing her the title of the volume, which was 'On Perspective.' 'You are quite right, dear aunt; only, just now, *laborare est orare* is my motto. It is printed on a scroll in the school-room at Minerva House, and Miss Steele used to translate it to the housemaid, "There is nothing like elbow-grease."'

'Why, my dear Ella, what has come to you? You are quite merry.'

'I am not going any longer to be morbid, at all events,' she answered cheerfully. 'What did you say was the dinner hour?'

'Well, the ordinary time is seven, but you are to have your meals just when you like.'

'Then that is at seven, with the rest of the—the Household, if you please, aunt. I am not going to mope any longer. I had rather do just like other people.'

'What! Will you dine with me and Mr. Heyton?'

'Certainly—that is, I want no difference to be made on my account.'

'But you are not to think—His Highness particularly said so—that you are putting anyone to inconvenience. On the other hand, it will certainly be better for you not to shut yourself up alone.'

'It will be much better, dear aunt,' said Ella brightly. 'Will these letters be in time for the post?'

'They will be just in time; but have you not written to Mr. Felspar?'

'I did not think there was any necessity' She endeavoured

to speak carelessly, but the effort it cost her convinced her how wise was her resolve to fly from reflection on certain matters.

'Well, well, no doubt you are the best judge, dear: else I thought his letter very kind, and it doesn't do to break with old friends.'

Ella gave some dumb sign of acquiescence. If she had spoken, she felt that the tears would have fallen that tell far more than words.

'However, perhaps you will see him again some day,' added Aunt Hester cheerfully; 'who knows? Then you can give him your thanks in person, with one of your own pretty smiles.'

Ella shut her lips, and once more nodded assent. It was marvellous to her that so kind a creature as Aunt Hester did not perceive that the topic she had chosen was a distressing one.

'I will just put your letters in the hall box, as there is no time to lose,' continued the old lady. 'There is the gong for dressing—not that you want to put on anything to make you look nicer, my dear, I'm sure; I shall come to take you in to dinner instead of a cavalier.'

## CHAPTER XL.

### A PARTY OF THREE.

IF misfortunes could be traced to their root (which is difficult), I am inclined to think that one of the great causes of human misery arises from the practice of dining alone. It may be urged, indeed, that it is not so bad as not dining at all; but that is an evil which corrects itself. Nature (which abhors a vacuum) soon puts you out of your misery. But the people who dine alone by choice—I don't speak of omnibus conductors and others, who of necessity snatch their meals—for the most live miserably and die unregretted. Throughout their solitary repast their egotism grows and grows; the newspaper that they prop up before them to supply the place of conversation is but a mirror in which they contemplate themselves; they arise somewhat more resolute, perhaps (for such feats as cutting off their poor relations with a shilling), but unrefreshed and acid. That pint of claret which concluded matters curdles their last drop of human kindness. Even bereavement is no excuse for this deleterious habit. If you have no spirits for companionship, take a few spoonfuls of Brand's beef tea or other concentration of nourishment, but do not sit down in solitude before a well-spread table and make a mock of the social meal. It is only animals who prefer to eat alone, and they have an excellent reason for it, since, being without a sense of proportion, they are afraid that the supply of viands may not suffice for the party.



It was not, indeed, from any philosophic reflection upon this matter that Ella Josceline had elected to join the common table at Barton Castle, but there is no doubt that her choice was a wise one. The worst company that we can consort with when the heart is heavy is our own; there is an immense temptation to confine ourselves to it, as there is to the weary traveller to lie down and sleep in the snow; but to succumb to it is to 'throw up the sponge' indeed.

It was a novelty, to begin with, and one of those little-thought-of accessories which, nevertheless, help to win us from ourselves, that 'the Household' at Barton Castle dined not in the dining-room, which was reserved for His Highness, but in the great hall. The inconvenience which such an arrangement would usually have involved in the way of some late caller or accidental arrival being ushered into the banquet-hall, and finding himself with his umbrella where other folks were wielding their knives and forks, was in this case not to be apprehended, for no one ever called at Barton Castle, or came without being sent for. The size and airiness of the place was in summer very charming; and the great staircase, the figures in armour, and the tall servants in scarlet liveries, were as great a contrast to the simple surroundings of the *table d'hôte* at the *Ultramarine* as the present company were to its guests. Mr. Heyton, in a white waistcoat and a red riband with some inscrutable order depending from it, took the head of the board, with Ella on his right, and Miss Burt, looking very stately in stiff black silk, opposite. The table was tastefully arranged with flowers, and the plates themselves made a fine show, for they were all of silver gilt.

'It is indeed an unexpected pleasure to see you here, Miss Josceline,' observed the secretary, with his hand on his ample shirt-front; 'there never was an instance in which the proverb "Two is company, but three is none," was more completely falsified.'

'Indeed, Mr. Heyton, I have neither the right nor the desire to be treated as company,' said Ella modestly; then, reflecting that he might possibly take this as an excuse for being familiar (which he certainly did not need), she added, 'I am merely here in order to give less trouble.'

'God bless the cause! as His Highness would say; eh, madam?' returned the secretary; and he looked at his *vis-à-vis* as if for corroboration.

Miss Burt said not a word, though a faint tinge of colour in her cheeks betrayed that she heard him. Even without that proof Ella would have felt certain, from a certain mischievous expression, which was comic without being good-natured, that accompanied his words, that he had said something designed to annoy her aunt. It was, in fact, one of the secretary's few pleasures to poke fun at his patron in the housekeeper's presence in such a manner that she could not resent it, while it aroused her extreme indignation.

'You are looking at my medal, Miss Josceline,' he continued; which, indeed, Ella was doing, simply because she did not know where to look, and was resolute not to meet his laughing eyes, which seemed to expect her to sympathise with her aunt's discomfiture. 'It is a very pretty trinket, and has at least the merit of being extremely rare, since I am the sole individual thus decorated. The whole Chapter of the order of St. Rosalie is included in my humble person.' He slipped the medal from its riband and placed it in her hand. 'The legend is a simple one—a babe being carried to a boat. It is supposed to resemble, or at all events to symbolise, His Highness's grandfather, at a very early stage of his existence, about to embark for England. I think I have stated the facts correctly; eh, Miss Burt?'

'You ought to be acquainted with them at least as well as I,' returned the housekeeper, quietly.

'Quite true; as I am the Chapter, you would say, I ought to have them chapter and verse.' And Mr. Heyton indulged himself in a long low chuckle, which, it is but fair to say, was evidently not only the appreciation of his own little joke.

'You are looking at the pictures, Miss Josceline,' he presently continued in a graver tone; for Ella's eyes, which had wandered to the wall to escape his own, showed great displeasure; 'they are among the few things at Barton Castle that you are free to say exactly what you think about; they are not like the family portraits in the gallery, which, if I am not mistaken, you have had the advantage of seeing under circumstances of peculiar advantage.'

'How so?' inquired Ella coldly, though, calling to mind his look when she left him in the garden, she guessed well enough his meaning.

'Well, had you not His Highness himself for your cicerone? Now these portraits belong to the Castle itself, and are the counterfeit presentments of the ancestors of its proprietor. They are therefore open to criticism.'

'I am no art critic, Mr. Heyton.'

'No, you are something much better; you are a born artist.'

'Indeed. You seem to know all about me from the very first,' said Ella, smiling. There was something in Mr. Heyton's audacity that amused her, or perhaps it was that she was resolved to get what she could out of the life that was left to her, and at all events not to make it more intolerable by taking needless offence.

'I judge from what I have seen with my own eyes,' returned Mr. Heyton, confidently. 'Your sketch of the "Italian Boy" in the magazine is admirable.'

'How came you to see it?' inquired Ella a little brusquely, and with a glance of plaintive reproof towards her aunt.

'I did not show it, my dear,' returned Miss Burt with a positiveness that was almost comic. 'I should not have dreamt of doing such a thing.'

‘No, indeed; there was no breach of confidence, I do assure you, Miss Josceline. It was His Highness himself, who, knowing I had some pretensions to artistic taste, was so good as to draw my attention to it. For which I thank him,’ he added gravely. ‘I do not say it was masterly, for that would be to use the language of exaggeration; I said to His Highness, “Miss Josceline *wants* a master, but the drawing has the very highest merit—that of suggestion.” One seems to feel exactly what, as I suppose, you intended to convey.’

‘They were only an illustration of the verses,’ observed Ella modestly, though indeed she felt her ears tingling. Praise of her art—or rather of her ‘turn for it,’ which had been all her father had allowed her to possess—was new to her. And to artists of all kinds praise is very sweet.

‘The verses?’ observed Mr. Heyton, with such an exaggeration of indifference as, had Ella known the world better, would have at once convicted him of falsehood. ‘I did not notice there were any verses.’

‘Oh, but you should have read them; they are very beautiful.’

‘I am afraid I don’t care much about magazine verse,’ said Mr. Heyton with a shrug of his shoulders. ‘Moreover, that drawing of yours needs no exponent. One reads in it at once the regret of the exile. That is the *motif*, is it not?’

Under other circumstances the use of this term would have struck her as an affectation, and thereby aroused her suspicions of the speaker’s genuineness; but the intoxication of flattery had done its work. To use a phrase not often applied to a young lady, she was ‘too far gone.’ For this gentleman, who was evidently a judge of art, to have deciphered the exact meaning her pencil had endeavoured to convey, was indeed a feather in her cap. It was much more grateful to her, as being without prejudice, than the expression of admiration the drawing had evoked from her aunt.

‘No one can tell, Miss Josceline,’ continued the secretary, ‘how I envy you this gift of yours; and yet to a man it is nothing compared with its value to one of your own sex. He was a wise man who said that there were few things more pitiable than a beautiful woman whose beauty is her only attraction. Her case is like that of a person afflicted with a fatal illness, of whom we say, “It is only a question of time.” She outlives herself in a few years and becomes nobody; what is worse, she sees all the homage that was once given her transferred to others. But if she is an artist, she is neither extinguished nor does she make herself wretched with vain regrets. Twenty years hence, Miss Josceline, you will appreciate the truth of my words.’

As Ella was silent, though by no means from any want of interest in Mr. Heyton’s observations, he looked across the table to Miss Burt with an ‘Am I not right, madam?’

‘As a moral aphorism, your remark is admirable,’ she replied; ‘indeed I scarcely know your equal for reflections upon the vanity of human life. As a particular observation addressed to Miss Josceline it should be especially agreeable, since it credits her both with beauty and genius.’

It is probable that Miss Burt thus expressed herself from a desire to put Ella on her guard against her companion rather than from her natural antagonism to him; but if so she failed in her intention. On the contrary, Ella felt that her aunt had been rather hard upon the secretary, the justice of whose remark indeed had especially recommended itself to her, while its flattery had escaped her notice.

‘I hope, Miss Burt, I have too much good feeling as well as good sense to pay compliments to Miss Josceline upon her talents as an artist. It would be false friendship indeed to flatter there. I was even about to observe,’ he said, turning to Ella, ‘that from the specimen afforded by the “Italian Boy” her landscape drawing does not impress one so favourably as her mastery of the figure.’

‘I am a very bad hand both at scenery and perspective,’ said Ella, frankly; ‘my only hope is to succeed tolerably with figure-drawing.’

‘If you have any knack of taking likenesses, Miss Josceline,’ said Mr. Heyton, with sudden earnestness, ‘I beg you not to cultivate it.’

‘Dear me! why not?’ inquired Ella with astonishment.

‘Well, in the first place’—here he hesitated, as though his first reason was not the one he had first thought of—‘unless you are a first-rate painter and nothing else, it leads to pot-boiling.’

‘I am afraid pot-boiling will be very necessary in my case,’ said Ella smiling.

‘If one may augur performance from promise, I think not,’ said Mr. Heyton confidently. ‘But apart from that, there is a certain loss of independence. Your sitter, especially if he be a person of high rank, becomes your patron. Foster, the painter, killed himself because he had a commission to paint Louis XVIII. receiving the Order of the Garter, and Bird died of disappointment at his failure to represent the same monarch landing at Calais: nothing can be made out of such subjects except a little money, and not much of that. It is not the highest-placed people who are the most liberal, and, moreover, they give a deal of trouble through their unpunctuality and selfishness.’

‘I thought the English royal family, at least, were famous for their punctuality?’ remarked Miss Burt, with that simplicity which a woman puts on when she asks a question which she knows can only be answered one way.

‘It may be so; I was speaking generally,’ returned the secretary smiling. ‘With all my admiration for Miss Josceline’s talents, I did not suppose she would just yet be summoned to Windsor.’



‘No, not just yet,’ said Ella smiling, but with a pitiful sense of her own powerlessness and insignificance.

‘Still, you have only to put your shoulder to the wheel,’ insisted the secretary. ‘Time and patience conquer everything. When Giardini was asked how long it would take to learn the fiddle, he answered, “Twelve hours a day for twenty years.” Even one without taste for it, would he meant, overcome all obstacles by that time. How much more, then, would a person with a natural bent that way, as is certainly *your* case as respects drawing?’

‘Upon my word, Mr. Heyton,’ said Aunt Hester, ‘you are growing very appreciative.’

‘Pardon me, madam, I am only critical; I come of a critical family like that mentioned by Hazlitt, the grandfather of which thought nothing of Garrick, the father thought nothing of Mrs. Siddons, and the daughter could make nothing of the novels of Walter Scott, though she liked Mr. Theodore Hook’s “Sayings and Doings.”’

It seemed impossible to put Mr. Heyton out of temper that evening, and Ella thought it rather hard that her aunt should so obviously try to do so. When they were once more in her little room together she hinted at this.

‘Well, my dear, I am sorry to seem to be hard upon him; but I know Mr. Heyton very well. Whenever he makes himself agreeable, as he did to-day, he does it with a purpose. He made himself very agreeable to *me* at one time—(no, not in the way you fancy; I am not fool enough to suppose *that*)—but in order to establish what he called an offensive and defensive alliance between us. It is no matter against whom or with what object, but I was obliged to tell him that, so far as I was concerned, such an alliance could be only offensive.’

‘But he can have no reason for conciliating me,’ pleaded Ella.

‘That is, none that you can see,’ answered Aunt Hester drily.

‘Just so. Do you know, Aunt Hester, I think Mr. Heyton was chiefly anxious to efface a bad impression?’

Aunt Hester nodded assentingly.

‘No doubt; he is altering his tactics. When he first saw you he thought that, being young and orphaned, and in a dependent position, he could carry matters with you with a high hand. But now that he perceives you have talent, and are a girl of character, he is going another way to work. Moreover, he knows that His Highness has taken a fancy to you, and that you may be dangerous.’

‘Dangerous! How so?’

‘Well,’ explained Miss Burt with hesitation, ‘he is very jealous of his influence over his master, and resents it being shared by anybody; by myself, for instance. Do you know why he warned you against portrait-painting, and especially in the case of great personages? That was to prevent you offering to paint His Highness’s portrait.’



‘Good heavens ! But I should never dream of such a thing.’

‘Of course not ; but Mr. Heyton dreams a good deal, and looks very far ahead. If a man could insure his own worldly advantage by taking thought beforehand, Mr. Heyton would be a prince and a millionaire.’

‘Do you really think, then, that his talk had an object in view?—it seemed to arise so naturally, and, so far as I can pretend to judge, was so intelligent and sagacious. When he spoke of diligence, for example, and said, “The busy bee has no time for sorrow,” he certainly said a wise thing. At all events, I felt it was good advice.’

‘No doubt ; and it appeared to be all the wiser because it had an application to your particular case. But I have my doubts as to its being his own.’

‘You mean to imply, then,’ said Ella laughing, ‘that Mr. Heyton is a plagiarist?’

‘He is a deal worse than that, my dear,’ said Aunt Hester sententiously, ‘he’s a bad one all round.’

## CHAPTER XLI.

### A PARTY OF FOUR.

To Ella the reticence of Aunt Hester with respect to Mr. Heyton’s character was almost as significant as her revelations ; it was a subject she evidently avoided as being a very distasteful one, and yet when pressed she spoke her mind upon it. She had left him at first to make his own way with her niece, and so long as he had failed in it, would have been well content to keep silence ; but no sooner had he gained her ear and appeared to be gaining her good opinion, than Aunt Hester had stepped in with her note of warning. Ella did not dispute her relative’s wisdom in this, and far less her good intentions ; but upon the whole, social life at the Castle, with her only two companions at daggers drawn, did not promise to be very cheerful, and she almost regretted having volunteered to come out of her retirement before there was need for it. She looked forward to this daily dinner party of three, with their services of silver gilt, with anything but pleasure, and would have preferred a dinner of herbs on wooden platters with a little friendly feeling. Her apprehensions on this score, as happens to us in so many cases (which is meant no doubt to be set on the *per contra* side of our many disappointments), proved to be groundless ; for on the very next day, when she was about to prepare for dinner, Miss Burt burst in upon her in a state of breathless excitement with the news that they would not be three that day at dinner, since His Highness himself would join the party.

‘Such a thing, my dear, has not occurred,’ she panted, ‘since I have been at the Castle.’

‘I am glad to hear he is coming,’ said Ella.

‘Now I am so glad to hear you’re glad,’ continued the old lady. ‘I was so afraid that it might make you nervous. There is really, however, nothing to be afraid of; “you have only to be like yourself,” as he says, “and you’re sure to please.”’

‘Who says?’ inquired Ella, laying down her pencil (which was now almost always in her fingers when she was not deep in perspective), and staring at her aunt in unfeigned surprise.

‘Oh, well, perhaps I shouldn’t have mentioned it; but His Highness was talking about you and your singing, and so on, and praising the naturalness of it.’

‘It certainly is not artificial,’ said Ella, smiling, ‘for I have had too little teaching; he must be very easily pleased.’

‘By some people, perhaps, my dear, but not generally; even Mr. Heyton, though he certainly does his very best, does not always succeed in that.’

‘I should like to see him at it,’ said Ella, smiling.

‘At what, my dear?’

‘Trying to please His Highness. Mr. Heyton on his best behaviour must be an interesting spectacle.’

‘He does not interest me,’ said Aunt Hester drily.

‘No; that is because you are used to him. Dear papa used to say that everybody was interesting for five minutes. I am not so clever, and therefore I don’t find out people so quickly.’

‘It will take you a very long time to find out Mr. Heyton, my dear,’ said Aunt Hester gravely.

‘Then the pleasure will last me all the longer,’ returned Ella, smiling.

‘What a strange girl you are!’ said the old lady, musing.

‘But I am delighted to see you so cheerful.’

‘Yes; with my father but a week dead,’ said Ella bitterly, ‘I must seem a strange girl indeed to most people—one without a heart, for one thing. There, don’t mind me, Aunt Hester; I know what you would say. It is better thus than to let nature take her way; besides, poor folks, as you yourself admitted, cannot indulge in the luxury of grief.’

‘You have forgotten the best reason of all, Ella; we agreed, you know, that to show a brave face to the world would be the best way to please those who have left you alone in it.’

‘Thank you, dear Aunt Hester, you are as wise as you are kind. It is indeed well to remember what you have just said. Only, when you see me talking and laughing you will recollect that for all that I have not forgotten——’

‘Ella, Ella, pray do not give way,’ cried Aunt Hester, earnestly. ‘I don’t call you “my darling” for fear it should make you worse, but I feel for you. Oh yes, for I know what it is.’

'Life is very, very hard,' sobbed the girl.

'Yes, at times it seems too hard. Yet it is not only in heaven that God wipes away our tears.'

'It was only for a moment, Aunt Hester; I am better now. Has the first gong gone?'

'Yes, deary. Let me put some eau de Cologne upon your sponge. There, now, nobody will know—at least nobody of any consequence.'

'That is a very modest speech,' said Ella, with a grateful smile.

'Oh, I did not mean myself, my dear; though it is quite true I am a person of no consequence. I meant that you would not deceive Mr. Heyton. He has the eyes of a lynx. Now, I wouldn't have His Highness know that you had been crying for a good deal.'

'Why not?'

'Well, because it would make him so sorry; it is his particular wish that you should be happy at Barton.'

'That is very kind of him,' said Ella; but she could not help thinking that his good wishes were not of the same sort she had been used to at Wallington. Perhaps it was bitterness of spirit that made her refuse to believe in the good feelings of great folks of all kinds, but it seemed to her that she was wanted to be happy for another's sake, and not her own; that she might make herself more agreeable to him, or be in better voice for singing. Dependence was new to her, but in time no doubt, she reflected, 'I shall come to understand things, and to see that sorrow or illness are out of place in one of my position, and put people of real consequence to inconvenience.' Or, on the other hand, would she never learn this distasteful lesson, but yearn all her life for sympathy and friendship upon equal terms? There are two ways by which the human character may be moulded: one by the gradual means of time and use, and another by a sudden plunge into the furnace of adversity. In this latter, however, there is some danger (of heartbreak) in the cooling process.

The dinner-table at Barton, always ample for its guests, had an addition that evening of a peculiar character. At one end there was a piece of elevated table-land, laid for a single person, which placed the others, as it were, below the salt. Here His Highness took his seat with a sort of curved bow to the rest of the company, as though he was just making their acquaintance, though, as a matter of fact, he had seen two-thirds of them a dozen times in the day. Ella, as it happened, he had not seen, and he at once addressed to her an inquiry after her health. He spoke in a low voice, as though the matter were a secret between them, so that her reply, which was somewhat in her usual tone, had almost the air of a breach of confidence. Whether from that imitation which is said to be the sincerest form of flattery, or from a notion of reverence, it was the fashion at Barton to speak in

hushed tones in His Highness's presence, which gave to the remarks indulged in a certain importance that they would otherwise, perhaps, have sometimes lacked. Shut out as they were from the external world, the tenants of the Castle had, as a rule, no everyday topics to discourse upon, while philosophy and literature were not encouraged. It was this absence of general conversation perhaps which gave Ella the opportunity of noting certain little facts which otherwise might have escaped her observation. One was that their host was helped first, like a Prince of the Blood, and her aunt and herself afterwards; another was that though he paid her but little colloquial attention, his eyes were as difficult to avoid as Mr. Heyton's had been on the previous day. Their glance was not so intelligent as the secretary's, but it was gentle and kindly, and the eyes were very fine eyes. On remarking subsequently on this to Aunt Hester that lady replied, 'My dear, you may well say that; such eyes were never seen in man or bird, save in the eagle and Prince Charlie.' An observation so uncharacteristic of the speaker, that Ella at once set it down as His Highness's own, though it was so only by adoption; the historical or natural-historical parallel having originally been suggested to him by Mr. Heyton.

If His Highness's eyes took those eagle flights in her direction, the secretary kept his lynx eyes upon His Highness. Not a look, not a word, not a movement of his august master escaped him. And when the solemn silence became too oppressive even for his master's mood, Mr. Heyton's musical voice was lifted up as though a fountain (of oil) had been suddenly set flowing.

'There has been a curious discovery, sir, at Wallington, to-day, where some workmen have been excavating.'

His Highness lifted his brows perhaps a hair's breadth. If the secretary had said 'The weather is fine at Wallington,' he could not have evinced a more profound indifference.

'It was at the *Ultramarine*, where Miss Josceline has been staying.'

'Indeed!' observed His Highness in a tone that seemed to say 'Why did you not say that at first, blockhead?'

'Yes; in a part of the building which I believe is called the Prior's House, is it not?' And the secretary appealed to Ella with so swift a side glance that his eyes hardly left his patron's face.

'Indeed, I have reason to know it,' she replied; 'it was there a dear little child in whom I was interested had a serious illness.'

'Miss Josceline has omitted to add, sir, that she nursed him through it,' observed the secretary.

'He must have been a happy boy,' observed His Highness. '"Oh, woman!"—what are the lines, Heyton?' The speaker in his turn, though addressing the secretary, kept his eyes fixed on his fair neighbour.

Mr. Heyton supplied the lines as in duty bound; he was not

only, as his master admitted, his right hand, but also his library of reference.

‘Well, sir, under the Prior’s House has been discovered a skeleton with a long Spanish cloak, which, however, mouldered away on being exposed to the air.’

‘A Spanish cloak!’ ejaculated Ella with excitement; ‘that is most curious. The poor child was terrified by some apparition of that nature; and indeed I saw it, or thought I saw it, myself.’

‘Happy apparition!’ ejaculated His Highness. ‘That is to say,’ he added with gravity, ‘if the vision was reciprocal. Do you really mean that you saw a ghost, Miss Josceline?’

‘Indeed, sir, I thought I saw something,’ said Ella, with difficulty restraining her emotion, though she felt it so ill-timed. ‘But of course one does not believe in ghosts.’

‘Well, I would not say that,’ returned His Highness; ‘only at the *Ultramarine* one would scarcely have supposed anyone of sufficient importance, though to be sure there have been Priors of noble lineage. You see it is only the oldest families who *have* ghosts.’

The positiveness and gravity with which he enunciated this amazing theory would under any other circumstances have tickled Ella’s sense of humour; but as it was, she only bowed her head, which, though she did not know it, was the wisest thing she could have done. Respectful submission was a thing His Highness greatly preferred to argument, or even conviction.

‘It has always struck me as remarkable,’ pursued the secretary, with a solemnity that would have excited suspicion in any breast save that of his patron, ‘that in the House of Stuart there is no well-authenticated record of a spiritual visitation. One would have thought that, with such a history, and distinguished by such melancholy events—Mary Queen of Scots and Charles I., for example’—(for an instant his eyes met Ella’s with such an expression of drollery that if he had added ‘both with their heads under their arms,’ it would only have seemed what might have been expected)—‘there would have been ghosts.’

His Highness shook his head as if in doubt upon this point. Upon the whole he seemed to feel it might be a distinction in the case of the very highest family *not* to be haunted.

‘It is curious,’ continued the secretary, ‘and adds a great weight of testimony to the incident, that Miss Josceline’s little companion should have seen the figure in question. Children always have a greater insight into the spiritual world than grown people.’

‘Or rather,’ put in Miss Burt, irritated as usual by the secretary’s veiled ridicule of their common patron, and especially at the annoyance, or even alarm, which the topic was evidently causing her niece, ‘should we not simply say that children are more easily frightened than grown persons?’

‘That scarcely goes to the root of the matter, madam,’ returned



the secretary; 'or, indeed, if it means anything, would suggest that there were no such things as ghosts at all, which is contrary to the views His Highness has been so good as to express to us. I have myself known an instance of a child, not indeed a ghost-seer, but who was the undoubted instrument of spiritual agency.' His glance, like a casting-net, took in both Ella and his patron as it inquired whether he should proceed. His Highness nodded, carelessly enough; but Ella, interested because of Davey's strange experience and eager for light upon it, murmured 'Pray tell us.'

'A lady of my acquaintance had three children, the youngest of whom was a girl of six. She was of a melancholy though by no means of a morose disposition, and very thoughtful for her years. Her air and manner also were what we call in a child "old-fashioned," but otherwise there was nothing to distinguish her from other children. One morning, while sitting by her mother's side with her doll in her arms, she suddenly observed, "Mamma, I should like to put my doll in mourning."

"That is a strange idea, Kitty; but I will ask Jane to get you some black calico at the shop." And she did so. Kitty was her mother's favourite child, either because she was the youngest and most delicate, or because her reticence and quiet ways did not recommend her to other people, who preferred her sisters Georgie and Nellie. She generally got what she asked for. A few days after this poor Georgie got a sore throat, which turned out to be diphtheria, and was dead in a few days. Her parents were inconsolable, and their loss made them doubly anxious for those that remained to them, especially Kitty, who showed premonitory symptoms of consumption, and for whose sake the family removed to the seaside, where, however, she gathered little strength. Six months afterwards she remarked in her quiet way that Dolly's dress was getting sadly the worse for wear, and that she must have a new suit of mourning.

"Mourning? Why mourning, my dear?" replied her mother. "How is it you are so fond of dressing it in black?"

"Oh, it must be black," said Kitty; "mine is not a gay doll, and dislikes going into society."

'On the first day that dolly had her new dress tried on a dreadful accident happened. Nellie, running too near the edge of the cliff, fell over it, and was picked up mortally hurt. She never spoke again, and died in a few hours. Then all the affection of her parents centred in Kitty. For a time she seemed to mend a little, as if responsive to their tender care; but after a few months she grew worse than ever. As her mother hung over her little bed one morning, she perceived that her doll, from which she seldom parted, and never when she slept, was dressed in a new suit of black. The recollection of the child's last two requests, followed by such sad fatalities, recurred to her with painful force, and Kitty seemed to read it in her eyes.

"I am very sorry, mamma," she whispered, "but I was

obliged to do it. I was afraid that you wouldn't let Dolly have her new mourning, so I got Jane to buy it for her."

'The next morning Kitty was found lying dead with her dumb favourite clasped in her arms.'

'I really think, Mr. Heyton, that you need not tell us such distressing stories,' observed Miss Burt, with irritation. 'You have quite frightened Miss Josceline.'

'No, indeed,' said Ella. 'It was very foolish of me if I looked frightened.'

'I am sure Miss Josceline is much too sensible,' observed His Highness confidently, 'to be frightened about a rag doll.'

'Just so—an aunt Sally; if I may be excused the vulgarity,' put in the secretary.

'Aunt who?' inquired His Highness sharply. It had suddenly struck him (forgetting that Mr. Heyton knew, or should know, nothing about it) that the secretary was making some contemptuous reference to the relationship between Ella and Miss Burt.

'Aunt Sally is the amusement of the lower classes on the racecourse, sir,' explained the secretary.

'Then the lower classes ought to be ashamed of themselves,' was the unexpected rejoinder. 'Her sex and age should be a protection to her. In the sense that every soldier is said to be a gentleman, every woman is a lady, and should be treated as such.' And with another sweeping inclination of his head to the company His Highness rose, whereat the company stood up (just as gentlemen rise when ladies leave the room), and remained standing till the door of his private apartments had closed behind him.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE COMMISSION.

It was curious, considering what we know of our heroine, to find her the champion of a personage like Mr. Heyton, but so vehement was Miss Burt against the secretary when the two ladies were alone together that evening, that Ella felt compelled to say a word or two in his favour, which unfortunately only added fuel to flame.

'It was my duty, my dear,' said Miss Burt, 'to have told you from the first that Mr. Heyton was a very dangerous man, and I neglected it.'

'But indeed, Aunt Hester,' smiled Ella, 'you have made up for that omission since.'

'Well, I only hope it is not too late, my dear—that's all.' And the good lady sighed and shook her head, like a medical man called into a rival's case.

'Too late! What *do* you mean, Aunt Hester? Mr. Heyton is certainly more interesting than I expected, but that is not saying very much.'

'I must say you seemed very much absorbed by his conversation, my dear.'

To this Ella scarcely knew what to say: the fact is, she had felt the secretary's conversation to be a considerable relief to the dulness of the dinner party; his doll story especially had, perforce, struck her. The supernatural (if well handled) is attractive to all who are not philosophers or very commonplace people; indeed the narrative in question had excited even Aunt Hester to the extent of curdling her blood, only her dislike of the *raconteur* was such that she would not have owned to having experienced a ray of interest in anything he said for millions. To Ella, however, the prevision of the unlucky Kitty seemed to have some association with little Davey. She did not actually accede to Mr. Heyton's theory, that the young were endowed with spiritual insight; but what had been found in the excavations at the Prior's House, coupled with the child's experience (and indeed with her own), staggered her not a little. Nay, though she knew such an idea must originate in her own nervous and abnormal mental condition, she had a sort of apprehension that in Davey's case, as in Kitty's, the incident might foreshadow his early death. In that case how desolate would the old man be without his child! Her pity would have been greater or more complete had not the thought of him reminded her of her father's misplaced hope. Thence her thoughts wandered once more to forbidden ground—to the friends she would never see again (and one of them, alas, so dear, so dear), from which she had to recall them as it were with a dead lift. It was injudicious, she bitterly reflected, in Aunt Hester, had she but known, to attempt to stifle in her any interest, no matter in whom or what, which might help to lead her from the contemplation of the past. At the same time she was conscious that it was only love and tenderness which suggested such a course of action.

'My dear Aunt Hester,' she said, calling up a smile, 'I do assure you Mr. Heyton's conversation does not "absorb" me. But I do not feel (perhaps, as you say, because I do not know him as well as you do) an aversion to him as a fellow-guest. To my mind he shows better in company than in a *tête-à-tête*. I told you I wanted to see him on his best behaviour.'

'And pretty behaviour it was,' put in Aunt Hester. 'Did you not see, not once or twice, but all through his tale, how, even when pretending to be most humble, he strove to make His Highness ridiculous? How he played upon his weaknesses, and exaggerated them while feigning to be sympathetic? How in every way, in short, he strove to represent him, in your eyes, in an unfavourable light?'

'There was certainly some satire in his speech occasionally,'

admitted Ella, 'which, considering their mutual positions, was unbecoming. But it must be allowed that His Highness's ideas are a temptation to persons given to cynicism.'

'There you see,' cried her companion bitterly, 'he has effected his object. You are already beginning to regard His Highness through Mr. Heyton's spectacles.'

'Which are certainly not rose-coloured,' added Ella, laughing.

'No, they are not. I could tell you what colour they are if it were worth while.' Here she stopped, trembling and greatly agitated.

'My dear aunt,' said Ella, gravely, 'pray believe that nothing Mr. Heyton may say will ever make me ungrateful to the master of this house.'

'That is spoken like yourself, dear, and the longer you live here the more reason you will have to speak and think well of him; that is, I think so—I believe so,' she added hastily. 'Even now—but no matter. I do not wish to be his partisan; you will judge for yourself.'

Aunt Hester's doubts were even a greater puzzle to Ella than her convictions. That she disliked the secretary very heartily was to be accounted for by his own conduct to her, as well as his feelings towards their common patron; but her 'I think so—I believe so,' when speaking of His Highness, was the first sign of want of confidence she had given in that quarter. She seemed to perceive the impression she had thus given, for she continued, with great earnestness, 'My dear, you are very young, and I am not the wisest of advisers; it is possible you may know more of the world than I, who have lived so little in it. Heaven knows, however, that I am acting for you to the best of my lights. Let us say no more about it, but leave matters in higher hands.'

And with that she wished her niece 'Good-night,' and left her to her books as usual.

That night, however, Ella read but little; her mind was full of meditations, neither on the past nor on the future, but on the present. Why was it that her aunt was so solicitous for her sake either about Mr. Heyton or his master? and what were the hopes or fears she evidently entertained concerning her?

In the morning came a letter which dispelled for the time all her speculations, and filled her young heart with unutterable joy—an expression, it must be acknowledged, generally reserved for the satisfaction derived from the tender passion, but which is nevertheless applicable to certain exceptional cases of another kind. The communication was of a very prosaic character, but it thrilled her being with ecstasy, for it convinced her for the first time that she possessed ambition. The 'dream that comes through the multitude of business' had here its converse, for out of this one business epistle there grew a hundred dreams:—

'Dear Madam,—We beg to acknowledge your favour of



yesterday. We are glad you are willing to furnish us with illustrations for the "Keepsake." In the meantime, however, perhaps you would not object to occupy your pencil upon a more private matter. We are about to publish an anonymous book of ballads from English history (by a Mr. Fortescue), and it strikes us that you might like to illustrate it. The pictures would be twelve in number and about the same size as that with which you have already favoured us, and we are prepared to pay the same price for them (two guineas each). If drawn upon the wood, we could make you a better offer, but without instruction it is improbable that you could succeed in this. We have communicated, however, with Mr. Bearward, and he has forwarded a few blocks as requested. As the publication of the ballads is pressing, we would request you to confine yourself for the present to that matter: we have sent the proof-sheets by this post. We have the honour to remain, dear Madam,

‘Yours faithfully,

‘PATER AND SON.’

Here was wealth, if not beyond the dreams of avarice, far beyond Ella's modest aspirations. Twenty-five pounds for twelve little drawings, and even still greater payment if she should be able to overcome the difficulties of drawing on wood. Let the rich man smile, whose money breeds while he sleeps or idles; or the popular lawyer, who for one glance of his eye on a client's brief (or for the mere promise unfulfilled of it) makes twice the sum that seemed to Ella so rich a guerdon. She could bear their contempt with a light heart, and was happier than either in her ignorant simplicity. Work and wage, the two great blessings of life under its modern conditions, were now assured to her. She opened the proof-sheets with eager hands, yet with enforced deliberation; she felt that impatience would be unbecoming in the commencement of a work so important, and the exhibition of it a proof of her incapacity. She was curious, of course, to read the poems which it was her task to illustrate, but there must be no undue haste. Moreover, she made up her mind not to be disappointed if they were deficient in merit; the more prosaic they were, the less they would suggest, and the harder they would consequently be to embody; but that was the worst of it. Their very deficiencies might in the end turn out to her advantage, since they would teach her to rely on her own resources. If Messrs. Pater and Son could have got an insight into their young client's mind they would have seen reason to congratulate themselves. No commission from Royalty itself ever gave to artist a more keen resolve to do her best than filled Ella's being. The idea of 'scamping' her work—which grows, alas, with our success in so many of us, and in all departments of human labour, even the highest—had no existence for her: she would as soon have thought of scamping her prayers. Success she hoped for, but of deserving



success, so far as pains and diligence might deserve it, she felt sure. Happy, happy Ella!

The ballads were twelve in number, and took for their subjects the stock events, which are also the most picturesque, of English history. Alfred and the Danes; the proxy wooing of Ethelwold: Elfrida's deadly stirrup-cup; and so on, down to the field of Chalgrave. The poems, though falling short of genius, struck her as being strong and vigorous. If the theme did not absolutely inspire, its stateliness never oppressed the author, so as to reduce him to platitude and the commonplace. The metre was for the most part monotonous, as is usual with ballads; but in some cases it was broken by the introduction of a song or two far superior to the general strain. The chief difficulty in Ella's way, and one which would have dismayed a less enthusiastic worker, was the necessity of portraying her characters in the dress of their period; but in her case, since it involved study, this only made the task more welcome. She had noticed some works on mediæval costume in the bookcase that would give her the required data, which was a more fortunate circumstance than perhaps she imagined; for diligence and correctness, though very well in their way, do not command everything, and among other matters with which they fail to supply their possessor is, for example, an accurate idea of the headgear worn by Guthrum.

At midday came the wood blocks, very neat and even, and as simple to look at as a child's puzzle. But by that time poor Ella was already in difficulties; her self-denial had not been strong enough to prevent her trying a sketch of the minstrel king in the Danish camp, and it reminded her of nothing so much as Mrs. Jarley's waxworks. Guthrum's disposition was, as we all know, a resolute one, and anything more characteristic in the way of stiffness she confessed to herself it was impossible to imagine than her representation of him. She had an impression, moreover, notwithstanding her studies in perspective, that considering he was not in the foreground, he was about four feet too high. Alfred's harp, too, though intended to be an imposing instrument, was, she felt, one of too great size and weight for a musician to carry about with him without the assistance of a wheeled conveyance. Ella's spirit, however, was indomitable. After all, she reflected, there were the wood blocks in which any mistake in the paper drawing might be rectified; nor could she resist the temptation of transferring her picture to one of them 'with alterations and improvements,' in order to try the effect. Then she sat down and began to cry.

Some people say that as soon as you begin to tackle a difficulty it disappears, but their genius must be great or their experience exceptionally limited. For the moment it seemed to poor Ella that after all she had mistaken her profession, and had better stick to bonnetmaking, for which, as we know, she had a very pretty turn. What disheartened her most was the comparison between

her own work and the pictures in the book of costumes, which, though necessarily of a formal kind, as it happened, were admirably executed. It is always thus, even to those of us who succeed when we are young. Our verses are so halting, our pictures are so feeble, our stories are so pointless, beside those of acknowledged merit. Then, as we grow in power and reach the same elevation, the light that we saw about them from afar has somehow failed; we stand on the very spot where they stood, or even higher, but the glow has departed which it was our ambition to share with them. Our ears once so greedy of praise are dull of hearing, and we discover—though, alas! without surprise, for we have long suspected it—that success is less sweet than endeavour.

‘Well, my dear, all I can say is,’ said Aunt Hester, who looked in at this crisis, ‘that I call your Alfred beautiful. I used to play on the harp myself, and must be allowed to know something about it; only mine had treadles.’

‘And this you would say is more like a Jew’s harp,’ said Ella bitterly.

‘Not at all, my dear. A Jew’s harp is quite different, and can never be mistaken for it, being played with the teeth. Believe me, all you want is good teaching.’

‘Dear Aunt Hester,’ answered Ella despairingly, ‘you might just as well say, “All you want is a million of money.”’

‘Nay, my dear, you should not talk like that,’ said the old lady gently. ‘Sometimes things drop from the skies—which means from heaven—when one least expects it.’

‘Do they?’ said Ella wearily.

‘Yes, quite as often as they come the other way—that is, I mean misfortunes,’ explained Aunt Hester with precipitation. ‘Now you would not think there was the very person of all others whom you most wished to see at this very moment under this roof.’

The very person she most wished to see! The colour rushed to Ella’s face, and her eyes stared inquiringly at her companion. Was it possible that Mr. Vernon was at Barton Castle, and if so, on what errand?

‘Yes, the million of money has come—that is, a tutor.’

Ella’s countenance fell. For our satisfaction at events is not a fixed quantity, but varies with our expectations.

‘But who can have sent for a tutor for me?’

‘The kindest of men—His Highness himself. Nay, do not look as if you could never accept such a weight of obligation. He foresaw your scruples, if I am not mistaken, and has provided against them. The gentleman comes nominally to—— That’s his knock at the door. There, I thought you would be pleased.’

Ella had started up with a little cry of joy, and was holding out both her hands in welcome to the new comer. It was Mr. Felspar.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

## AN EXPLANATION.

ELLA's welcome—smile, glance, and gesture—took both visitor and spectator by surprise. Aunt Hester was almost shocked at it. She had a suspicion that her niece was not quite heartwhole. Was this, then, and not the other, the young gentleman who had attracted her young affections? Felspar himself was even still more astonished by the warmth of his reception, and for an instant tempted to take a similar view of it. But a moment's reflection convinced him of what was the true state of the case—how, notwithstanding the shortness of the interval since they had last met, it had comprised for Ella the experience of a lifetime; and though she had had such scanty knowledge of him, circumstances, by associating him with her old life, had made of him an old friend. He met her advances with equal friendliness, but with a respect which, if they had been alone, would have been even still more marked. His heart bled for her—poor, orphaned, well-nigh friendless—but also for himself. The temptation to put himself in his friend's place, when he had once ceased to feel the pressure of her eager hand, was no greater than it had been, yet some would have said there was more excuse for it, for since he last saw her his friend's chances had become almost hopeless. Vernon had admitted to him on his return from his last visit to Mr. Josceline, that he had promised that gentleman on his death-bed that he would never ask his daughter's hand in marriage except under certain conditions, which practically amounted to a perpetual prohibition. To Vernon they had not seemed to do so at the time; he had indeed rather welcomed them as being at all events better than the point-blank rejection he had anticipated—if indeed that can be called a rejection which was volunteered, and evoked by no direct proposal of his own. But the object of this seeming complaisance was now only too plain. It gave time not only for Mr. Aird to make his offer without a rival so far as Vernon was concerned, but for a score of other eligible parties, should such present themselves, to do the like.

What had happened may be best gathered from a conversation between Mr. Aird and Mr. Felspar, which had taken place on the very day of Ella's departure from the *Ultramarine*. The former had called on the painter in the absence of Vernon from Clover Cottage, and for once without little Davey.

'I want to say a few words to you, Mr. Felspar,' he said, without the least circumlocution, 'about Miss Josceline,

Felspar bowed, perhaps a little coldly. He understood by this time exactly what had been Mr. Josceline's expectations, and he was not sure that they were unfounded.

'She is a young lady in whom I feel a deep, nay, I may say an affectionate interest,' continued the old man; 'and I fear she has entered into the battle of life without understanding its difficulties and its dangers.'

'That is very true, sir,' admitted the other. 'As to its dangers, however, she has gentleness and purity, which are as good safeguards as in Una's time.'

'I don't know about Una,' answered the old man brusquely; 'but I know there are a good many blackguards about in all ranks, not excluding the highest, and that simplicity is their natural prey. Do you know anything of this man at Barton Castle?'

'Very little; though all I have heard of him is to his advantage. Moreover, Mrs. Wallace assured me that Miss Josceline is in safe hands at Barton, with a female relation of her own.'

'That's strange; for she told me she had none. However, let us suppose her well placed for the present. What views has she for the future?'

Mr. Felspar shrugged his shoulders.

'Come, sir, you feel a greater interest (as I hope) in this good girl than you permit yourself to express.'

For the moment Felspar imagined that this man had read the secret of his soul. Fortunately he had a great command over himself—he had the habit of self-control—or he might have made, as it turned out, a most unnecessary revelation.

'You are quite right, Mr. Aird; I feel for her deeply, and I would do all in my power to save her—and so would Vernon.'

'May I ask whether you have any particular reason for introducing that young man's name in connection with Miss Josceline?' inquired the old man sharply.

Felspar was silent for a moment. His suspicions of Mr. Aird's intentions were confirmed by his tone of irritation.

'Well, well, I do not wish to be intrusive,' continued his companion. 'It is clear to me, at all events, that you both know something about this young lady, have been more or less familiar or confidential with her—it is only natural that she should have been more frank with you than me, though I tried to win her confidence—and hence it is that I am come for your advice on her behalf. Are you aware that I ventured to offer her, through a third person, and as delicately as I could manage it, certain pecuniary assistance?'

'Yes; it was a large sum,' answered Felspar significantly.

'It was no more than I owed her for her kindness to a friendless old man, who is not long for this world, and to his delicate darling boy—poor little Davey.'

The tears came into the speaker's eyes; it was clear that to his own mind the phrase 'not long for this world' had suggested

itself twice over—in the child's case as well as his own. Mr. Felspar's heart was touched and won at once; he perceived that he had been on the brink of a fatal error.

'Yes, sir; I think I can tell you, though it may give you some annoyance, why Miss Josceline did not and could not accept your munificent benevolence.'

'It was a debt, I tell you.'

'Perhaps so; but, being unconscious of her own deserts, she thought it an obligation.'

'That was not like her,' answered Mr. Aird doubtfully. 'Moreover, if she had thought so she would have said so. She is frankness itself.'

'True; but in your case something sealed her lips. Can you not guess what it was without my telling you? Think, think,' and he placed his hand gently on the other's arm.

'No, Mr. Felspar, I cannot guess. If I had been a younger man, then her reason would have been obvious; but in my case, with one leg in the grave. She did not know that, you would say?' he sighed. 'Well, it is so. At all events it is plain to her that I am old enough to be her grandfather. No; I can think of no reason except some exaggerated notion of the gift itself. What's a thousand pounds to me? On the other hand, it would have been a great assistance to her. It was mad in her to refuse it.'

'No, Mr. Aird, it was not mad. I am doubtful whether she would have taken it in any case, though I think it should have been taken (had there been no bar to its acceptance) in the spirit—a most generous and noble one—in which it was offered. But there was a bar. Listen. Miss Josceline's father, who was buried yesterday, and is therefore safe from the reproaches of a man like you, was, unlike his daughter, of the world worldly.'

'I know it; she is a grape from a thorn; God bless her.'

'Well, being such as he was, by bringing up, perhaps, more than by nature, he looked to his daughter's preferment rather than to her happiness. He loved her, we should remember, though to our minds his way of showing it was a mistaken one; and his object was to get her married to some rich man, no matter how unsuitable he might be to her in other respects. That wish was uppermost in his last moments, as I happen to know, and I have no doubt that he imparted it to Miss Josceline.'

'Very likely,' said Mr. Aird; 'but what has all that to do with her refusal of my little gift? I should have thought that the advice of such a man would have tended to its acceptance, even had it not been his daughter's due.'

'Undoubtedly it would; but don't you see how he made it impossible for her—being what she is—to accept it from your hands?'

'Not a bit of it. I'm as much in the dark as ever.'

'Suppose, Mr. Aird, that her father was so careful in the



matrimonial advice he gave her as to point out some particular individual. I know he put his veto against some one; and is it not possible he indicated to her—by name—the person whom he wished her to marry? Suppose, for example, it was yourself.'

'I? Indicate me as Miss Ella's future husband? Why, what a villain!'

'Pardon me, Mr. Aird,' put in Felspar quickly; 'do not use a term so unnecessarily harsh. In Mr. Josceline's rank of life nothing is more common than this sordid disposal of a daughter's hand; and in your case—except for the disparity of years——'

'Except!' broke in the old man indignantly; 'don't talk of exceptions. I say that no man, dead or alive, had any right to take me for such a scoundrel. Did he think, because I have been in India, where folks buy their wives in the slave-market—— You are frowning, sir, and quite right, too, at my associating this charming young lady with such an institution. It is a sacrilege to do so, even by way of metaphor; then how much more to think of it as a practical possibility? I was never so much shocked and horrified in my life.'

'Then how much more, think you, must Miss Josceline have been shocked by such a suggestion, Mr. Aird? At first, no doubt, like you, she was slow to believe the possibility of the seriousness of her father's project; but once having learnt the truth——'

'I see, I see. There is no need to fill up the picture; your outline is quite enough, Mr. Felspar. From my hand, of course, she could never have taken a sixpence.'

'Then how much more a thousand pounds?' said Felspar, smiling.

'To be sure; the more the worse,' answered the other naïvely. 'It must have seemed like an advance of the purchase-money. I perceive, now, why the poor girl never wished me good-bye.'

'It was not for want of gratitude nor respect, Mr. Aird, of that you may be sure,' said Felspar. 'And you know how she loved little Davey.'

'God bless her; yes,' returned the old man, thoughtfully. Then, after a long pause, 'You said something about a veto. Since Mr. Josceline was so good as to select me for a son-in-law, it may seem invidious to inquire who was the gentleman he did not approve of in that capacity; but it is not for the purpose of exulting over him that I ask the question.'

'I suppose not,' said Felspar, smiling; 'still it is a private matter, and I ought never to have alluded to it. You know so much, however, that you may as well know all. Upon his death-bed Mr. Josceline exacted a promise from Vernon that he would never propose to Miss Josceline unless he had an income of a thousand a year to share with her. It was cruel to propose such an arrangement, and quixotic to agree to it; but the thing was done.'

‘And do these two young people love one another?’

‘I can answer for one of them,’ said Felspar, gravely.

‘You mean Vernon, of course. But what of Miss Josceline?’

‘I do not presume to read her heart,’ answered Felspar, slowly. ‘I think, however, her father read it, which suggested his precaution.’

‘And will Vernon keep his word?’

‘Most undoubtedly. Mr. Josceline showed his knowledge of mankind in trusting to it.’

‘And the thousand a year?’

‘He will never acquire the half of it. Such a stipulation is like one of the impossible tasks that are imposed by the evil geniuses in fairy tales. Vernon will do his best, and break his heart over it.’

‘But a thousand a year is not much to make.’

‘It is not much to a trader, nor even to the professional man; nay, it is not much to make, as the phrase goes, “out of his own head” to the man of genius. But Vernon falls short of that.’

‘Indeed! I thought he was such a clever young man.’

‘So he is; but he is no more a genius than I am. He has the same knack of writing as I have of painting, and the former does not fetch so much in the market as the latter.’

‘You are very modest for self and friend,’ observed Mr. Aird quietly.

‘No; it is only that I have learnt to see things as they are. The prizes in literature and art—especially in literature—are very few; the blanks are very numerous; and there is a good supply of moderate remuneration—incomes of so many hundreds a year but which never reach to four figures. Vernon, as you say, is clever. He is much more than that: he has poetic ideas, and expresses them very gracefully. But no versifier, however graceful, can earn shoe-leather. Vernon’s prose is thin; and (in story-telling for example) he has not the gift of prolonged effort. All is swallow flight. He will never produce a novel worth reading.’

‘You seem very positive, Felspar; but you don’t know everything, I suppose?’ said Mr. Aird, with his old irritable manner.

‘No; I know very few things; but those I do know, I know thoroughly,’ returned Felspar simply. ‘You surely do not suppose that I am capable of depreciating my friend? We are talking, as I conclude, in the strictest confidence. I would rather cut my right hand off, by which I gain my living, than let Vernon know what I have told you. He is full of hope and spirits, poor fellow, and eager for work.’

We poets in our youth begin in gladness,

But thereof comes in the end——’

He broke off, and sighed heavily.

‘Now, suppose you should be all wrong, my good sir, and our young friend should turn out a popular author.’

'Then you shall write me down an ass, where there are so many other uncomplimentary entries,' said Felspar, forcing a smile, in the Visitors' Book in the *Ultramarine*. Never was prophet so glad to be falsified as I should be in such a case.'

'And a pair of bright eyes we wot of, Mr. Felspar, would be all the brighter, would they not?'

'I think so; nay, I am sure of it,' said Felspar, correcting himself.

'Then let us hope for the best,' said the old man. And with a cordial handshake he took his leave.

But though Felspar hoped for the best, too, for his friend, he had no illusions with respect to his making a thousand a year by his pen, or the one-half of it. Hence it was then, as we have said, that when Ella received him so warmly, a temptation seized him to take the welcome as to himself alone, which was really evoked by the association he brought with him.

The next instant she had asked after Mr. Vernon, neither with effusion nor indifference, but with a blush that told him all, and would have been reflected in his own face had the least touch of disloyalty harboured within him.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### AN HISTORICAL POEM.

'VERNON is all right, Miss Josceline,' answered Felspar, in reply to Ella's inquiry, 'or rather he was so when I last saw him yesterday morning. He has left Wallington Bay, however, for London.'

'What, for good?' There was not any surprise in Ella's tone, but an involuntary dismay. Of course it was no matter to her, since she was never to see him more, whether Vernon remained in the neighbourhood or not; but the idea of his departure depressed her. Next to death, in connection with those dear to us, we fear distance, notwithstanding the talk about railways and the telegraphs having mitigated the latter calamity.

'For good?' echoed Felspar cheerfully; 'yes, indeed, I hope, for good. He is gone to prosecute his profession where he thinks it can be pursued more diligently and with greater profit—in London.'

'Like Dick Whittington,' said Ella with a forced smile, but conscious of a white face and a beating heart.

'Yes,' said Mr. Felspar slowly, 'rather like Dick Whittington. I hope he may have the same good luck. Clover Cottage is very dull without him. Everybody is deserting poor Wallington now, Miss Josceline. Mr. Aird and Davey went this morning. The former begged to be particularly remembered to you (here the

speaker turned scarlet), and the child sent you all sorts of tender messages. It is my belief, if you will allow me to say so, that you have no more genuine well-wisher in the world than Mr. Aird.'

'He is a most kind-hearted, generous man,' said Ella firmly. She kept her colour here, though perhaps if she had been aware that her companion knew what he did, it would have been difficult for her to have done so.

'Yes, his nature is in many respects a noble one,' assented Felspar. 'His devotion to little Davey rivals the love of a mother.'

'By-the-bye, Mr. Felspar, what is that story about the excavations at the Prior's House, which was our hospital, you know? I heard something of a skeleton being found there.'

'And so there was. It will be a nine days' wonder for good Mrs. Gammer.'

'But what is the explanation of it?'

'Well, I suppose it was some old monk who had not the same fancy that we moderns entertain "to lie beneath the clover sod."'

'But how about the Spanish cloak found in his grave?'

'Oh, that is an addition to the story that is new to me. The cloak was probably put on at Barton. By the time the tale gets to Lawton there will doubtless be a toledo, or a stick of liquorice, to match the Spanish cloak. I was present at the discovery of the bones, and there was nothing else found *in situ*, I do assure you.'

'That is curious,' murmured Ella.

'The whole thing, of course, is curious, but not so extraordinary as to affect, one would imagine, the actions of any human being; yet it has been the cause of Mr. Aird's sudden departure. He thinks the incident may disturb little Davey's dreams if he remains at the *Ultramarine*. I make every allowance for paternal affection, and admire it, but Mr. Aird permits it to go too far. If anything was to happen to that boy it would be the death of his father; so that the two lives, as it were, hang on a thread.'

'Do you think dear little Davey is very delicate, then?'

'I do; and when I look at the child I tremble for the old man. However, as Dr. Johnson says, "Do not let us discourage one another with forebodings." As for me, I ought to be grateful for this most unexpected pleasure of meeting with my old pupil. A part of my business here, as I learn from your good aunt, is to give you lessons in drawing on the wood.'

'Yes, that is quite right,' observed Miss Burt, looking up from her knitting-needles; she had produced them from her pocket on Mr. Felspar's appearance, and quietly gone on working ever since, leaving the young people to have their say without molestation. 'His Highness is greatly interested in Miss Josceline's progress with her pencil, but feels she is in need of instruction. On the other hand, he knows Mr. Felspar is much too distinguished an artist to give drawing lessons. He therefore hits on the plan of

having his portrait taken—an idea, by-the-bye, he has long had in his mind—and inviting Mr. Felspar to Barton Castle for that purpose, and, and——

‘And having once got him into his power,’ continued Mr. Felspar, taking up the thread of the other’s narrative, ‘this feudal chieftain threatens to cast the distinguished artist into the deepest dungeon beneath the castle moat unless he consents, in the intervals of portrait-painting, to become a drawing master. Alarmed by this menace the artist sinks his pride, and degrades himself as requested.—So this is your first essay on the wood, Miss Ella, is it?’ he added, taking up the block. ‘The gentleman with the harp is, I conclude, King Alfred; but how do you know he was left-handed?’

‘He is playing with his right hand, as he should do, is he not?’ said Ella simply.

‘Well, no, not exactly. This other gentleman, too, is holding his goblet, not dexterously, but in some sinister manner—a tutor is nothing if he is not classical—Seriously, dear Miss Josceline, don’t you see that your *dramatis personæ* will be left-handed when they come to be printed off?’

‘Dear me, how foolish of me.’

‘Not at all; it is only because you are new to the work. The mistake, however, reflects credit on you, as it shows you do not much consult the looking-glass, in which the same change is effected.’

‘That is really very pretty,’ exclaimed Miss Burt.

‘At all events, it is a very polite way of stating the indubitable fact that I am very stupid,’ said Ella. She was regarding her left-handed drawing with great contempt and chagrin. ‘I wish you would tell me the plain truth, Mr. Felspar. Of performance you need not speak, for I know there is none; but is there any real promise in all this?’

‘It is very curious,’ said Felspar gravely, ‘but that same question was put to me not long ago relating to another young aspirant. It was not so difficult, however, to reply in that case, because the inquiry was made by a third person.’

‘Pray do not consider my feelings, Mr. Felspar,’ answered Ella earnestly; ‘it will be kinder to me to speak the truth.’

‘Well, honestly, then, Miss Josceline, you have considerable talent. As to your being a born artist, as the phrase goes, I am doubtful about that; the talent should have developed itself earlier.’

‘Do not mock me, Mr. Felspar. I am well aware that I shall never be a Rosa Bonheur or a Mrs. Butler.’

Her companion smiled—perhaps at the energy of her modesty, or it might be at the juxtaposition of the names she mentioned; your artist has always his favourites, which makes the expression of opinion in the layman dangerous.

‘You think me a fool,’ she added, mistaking the cause of his



amusement, 'for associating myself with such company even for the sake of illustration. Oh, Mr. Felspar, is there no hope? shall I never earn my bread by my pencil?'

'Your bread? Certainly, you need not be afraid of that; the finest and most expensive description of French roll.'

'There, didn't I tell you so, Ella?' broke in Miss Burt triumphantly.

'Yes; but then, dear Aunt Hester, you're not an art critic; you're made up of sugar and spice and all that's nice.'

'Just so,' assented Mr. Felspar; 'whereas art critics and tutors, they are made up of frogs and snails and puppy dogs' tails, and everything objectionable.'

'I didn't mean that, I'm sure,' said Ella hastily.

'If you did you would not be far wrong. Now let us proceed to business. His Highness' (here Mr. Felspar's face began to pucker into an indescribable smile, which at Ella's warning glance became still more comic in its gravity) 'does not sit till this afternoon, so we have a couple of hours before us. In the first place, how came you to hit upon such a novel subject for illustration as King Alfred?'

'I don't wonder at your laughing at the originality of my ideas, Mr. Felspar, but the fact is (and here you will laugh still more) I have got a commission; and she handed him the publishers' letter.

'Come, this is famous,' said he. 'This all comes of your organ-grinder.'

'And Mr. Vernon's introduction,' said Ella.

'Quite true,' admitted Felspar; 'that no doubt assisted you. It is not one's first success that causes one to forget old friends.'

'I hope I shall never be successful if that is what comes of it,' returned Ella with a quick blush. Felspar smiled and sighed.

'That is well said, Miss Josceline. Are these poems by Mr.—What's his name—Fortescue—worth anything?'

'To my mind they are very good—quite good enough for their would-be illustrator, at all events. But you can judge for yourself.'

'I would rather hear you read them. Let us have the "Alfred," at all events.'

Without hesitation, but with a little nervous tremor of the voice that was not unbecoming to the subject, Ella read as follows:—

All his land was with the Dane,  
All his kingdom from him ta'en  
Save that Isle of Athelney,  
Save that spot whereon he lay;  
Fifty roods of marshy ground,  
Set with stagnant water round,  
He that should be king and lord,  
Owner but of his good sword,

Isle of Nobles, well 'twas called,  
 Ditch-encircled, wattle-wall'd,  
 Never yet held place of pride  
 Nobler than did there abide ;  
 Never from the stateliest tower,  
 Forth look'd king in leaguer'd hour,  
 With a thousand at his hest  
 Of the bravest and the best,  
 Half so king-like as did he,  
 Girt by that scant company ;  
 Never in the after time  
 Shall there stand one more sublime ;  
 One of all his royal race  
 With less shadow of disgrace ;  
 Never one more truly king,  
 (If that brow do lack its ring).  
 Though to some shall bend the knee  
 Nations from beyond the sea,  
 Then that were not known to be.

‘That last is rather awkwardly expressed,’ observed Felspar ;  
 ‘otherwise I congratulate Mr. Fortescue—and you.’

Monarch, who mad'st war to cease  
 But to be more great in peace ;  
 Statesman, who in evil age  
 Gav'st men equal heritage ;  
 Warrior, first of all that race  
 Gleaning smiles from captive face ;  
 Poet of the dead achieved  
 (Bay and laurel interleaved) ;  
 Perfect man of matchless fate,  
 Alfred, Britons own ‘the Great.’  
 Minstrel, too—for, whence it hung  
 Reach'd he down the harp unstrung,  
 Laid he bow and bugle by,  
 Quench'd the king-light in his eye,  
 Taking his song-lighten'd way  
 From that Isle of Athelney,  
 Unto where the Royal Dane  
 Campèd lay with Prince and thane.  
 For in ancient days to bard,  
 Need was none of gold or sword ;  
 Threaten'd none his life or limb,  
 For his harp was shield to him ;  
 He that drew the smile and tear,  
 Cause had never frown to fear ;  
 Nor unguerdon'd sang their lays  
 Minstrels of the ancient days.

Far he mark'd the Réafen,  
 Floating o'er their pirate den—  
 Flag, whose spell had oft been proven  
 By slain Hubba's sisters woven,  
 Waving left hand, waving right,  
 Ill or well as fared the fight ;  
 Sure shall now the coal-black wing,  
 Now, if e'er, its warning fling ;  
 Now from that discordant throat,  
 Burst, if e'er, a boding note.

Yet, it droops in sleepy fold  
While the foe stand in their hold.

Spoils he mark'd from every place,  
Which the traitress sea doth face ;  
Gold and silver vessels set,  
With their holy wine still wet ;  
But the priests, they lie in gore  
And shall bless no goblets more.  
There are carven clubs from Spain,  
But the scent does not remain  
Of the peaceful cedarn wood—  
There is hair on them and blood ;  
Boss'd shield and javelin,  
(Axe and bare breast did them win)  
Pluck'd from many a wasted strand ;  
Beakers for the double hand,  
Standing up to the mid-thigh,  
Only chiefs might set down dry—  
They who couch'd their yellow hair,  
Round the feast-board half made bare,  
Toying with their captured feres,  
Hewn from out some grove of spears ;  
Grinn'd the wolfshead helm above,  
Each fierce leader's eyes of love ;  
Grimly nodded each their pleasure  
Beating to the mystic measure,  
Subject to the throbbing string,  
And owning in the bard a king.

‘Well done, Fortescue,’ cried Felspar. ‘That is a happy touch.’

Guthrum, set amidst his power,  
Victors in their vassal hour,  
Courteous speech and look could spare  
To him who brought high music there ;  
‘If thy voice, Sir Minstrel, be  
Rare as is thy minstrelsy,  
Fear not thou to raise its tone,  
Rebel tongue though thou may'st own.’

#### SONG.

I strike my harp with fetter'd hand,  
I sing to alien ear,  
And yet my song is sweet to me,  
And yet my harp is dear.  
My foot is set on native soil,  
A soil that is not free ;  
My kin are slain, my love is lost,  
My harp remains to me.  
The ruin'd home that shelter'd me,  
The burnt and wasted plain,  
A smiling cot, a fertile vale,  
I find in song again.  
And where I go, or friend or foe,  
A welcome free affords  
The voice that sings to every heart,  
The hand that rules the chords.

‘That is graceful,’ remarked Felspar, ‘but thin and feminine.’

‘That is just what Guthrum thought,’ said Ella, laughing. He, too, must have been an art critic.’

‘Small and early, eh?—very likely,’ said Felspar.

Clash of spear and targe’s ring  
Greeted loud the minstrel king;  
Wrench’d the chieftain from its hold  
Armlet rough with massy gold:  
‘Guerdon’d thus, Sir Scald,’ he said,  
‘Sing us song less fit for maid  
Sick for love, and sad by choice,’

(‘That is a good line,’ interpolated Felspar.

Thus he sang with fuller voice:

#### SONG.

The wolf and the wild dog  
Are under the hill,  
The hart’s in the upland,  
The fox in the ghyll;  
There’s game for the hunter  
On mountain and moor,  
But mine be the forest,  
And mine the wild boar.  
His crash through the covert,  
From sleuth-hound to flee—

‘I doubt about the sleuth-hound,’ interrupted Felspar. ‘They didn’t hunt boars with sleuth-hounds. He might as well have written pug-dog. Never mind, go on.’

His crash through the covert  
From bear-hound to flee,  
His roar like the thunder  
Is music to me;  
The trace of his black blood  
And foam track afar,  
More glads me than wine cup,  
Fill’d high after war;  
His warm lair abandon’d,  
When madden’d, half blind,  
He comes swift as storm-bolt,  
My staunch dogs behind;  
I, right in his pathway,  
With bow-string at strain,  
And dart drawn to stone-head,  
One moment remain;  
The next through that red-eye  
The arrow hath flown,  
The short sword finds scabbard,  
The death-mort is blown.

‘That is much better,’ said Felspar. ‘There is vigour in that. What did Guthrum say about it?’

From the wassail brake a shout,  
Over the dark hills about,

Scaring many an antler'd deer,  
 Mayhap, in his dusky lair ;  
 Rousing with its tumult long  
 Many a hero of that song,  
 Following far upon his way  
 The minstrel king to Athelney.  
 When King Alfred came again  
 Guest unto the royal Dane,  
 It was not with harp or song ;  
 But his island strength among,  
 In green Selwood that had grown  
 Watchful for that hour to dawn.  
 Where the dart might least offend,  
 Well the minstrel's eye had kenn'd—  
 Rampart's low declivity,  
 Vacant guard, or sheltering tree.  
 From a nest made desolate,  
 The Danish raven croak'd her hate—  
 Thanks unto our minstrel king—  
 Marr'd in claw and clipp'd in wing.

‘Now confess that is very fair, Mr. Felspar. I think I am to be envied for having such a poem to illustrate: and the rest are quite as good.’

‘I think Mr. Fortescue is to be envied too,’ said Felspar gently; ‘I mean, of course,’ he added, ‘in having so appreciative an illustrator. Don’t you think so, Miss Burt?’

‘I do indeed, Mr. Felspar; I think the picture quite as good as the poem.’

‘At all events, Miss Josceline will make it so before she has done with it,’ said Felspar confidently. ‘And now let us set to work.’

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE SITTING.

So assiduously did Miss Burt perform her duties as chaperon that throughout the drawing lesson she never left tutor and pupil to themselves, and Ella had consequently no opportunity of giving Mr. Felspar any information concerning His Highness. All that he knew about him, save from village rumour, he had gathered from a few words dropped by Miss Burt, which we may be sure were not very explanatory.

It was, therefore, with some curiosity that the painter received presently a summons to his new patron's presence. Patron, by the way, was a word that Mr. Felspar especially disliked, from a certain personal pride rather than from that reverence for their art which some artists genuinely entertain and which more pretend to; he always eschewed it; nay, he was even in the habit of



reversing matters and calling his patrons clients. Indeed, except so far as professional skill was concerned, His Highness could hardly have made a worse choice of a painter to hand down his twenty times transmitted features to posterity than in the present case; which was hard upon him, since his object in employing him was not wholly a selfish one. It had, it is true, long been on his mind that it was little short of a sacred duty with him to be transferred to canvas; for he was getting on in years, and it was not likely that he would ever find a suitable bride by means of whom he might be reproduced in flesh and blood. It was a terrible thing to think that the last of the Stuarts might pass from the earth without a record; that unconscious of his existence while alive, the nation should not even have an opportunity of beholding his counterfeit presentment, suggestive of such mighty might-have-beens. He was not angry with his fellow-creatures for their lack of recognition; but it filled him with a certain pathos on his own account. What a strange life for the one survivor of his race to die unknown and unacknowledged in that obscure corner of what (had matters been a little different) would have been his dominions!

Such a feeling, of course, was grotesquely egotistic, but it was as genuine as any mediæval superstition. It has been said of too good a Catholic that he was more papistical than the Pope; but His Highness was, as it were, the best of Catholics and the Pope himself as well. The necessity of having his portrait taken being admitted, and, as we have said, a duty owed both to himself and to posterity, it was a malicious stroke of fate to send him Michael Felspar for his portrait-painter.

It was that gentleman's custom, on important occasions like the present, to place his sitters upon a platform which was raised and lowered by a winch; but with the exception of that elevation, he treated even the highest of them as though they were upon his own level. He had undertaken, at Miss Burt's request, to address his new patron as 'Sir'—a monosyllable to which he had an objection; but she had fortunately not suggested that he should stretch this to 'His Highness.' His lips would have uttered the appellation with unwillingness, even in the case of the genuine article; and he certainly did not believe that 'Mr. Edward' came under that head. His own impression was that that mysterious personage had some connection with some outside pretender, such as Don Carlos, although his living in a castle and being a man of wealth rather militated against that theory. The painter had not much curiosity in his composition, and it is doubtful whether he would have accepted his present commission at all but for the opportunity it held out to him of renewing his acquaintance with Ella. He had, as we know, a personal interest only too warm and tender in that young lady, which of itself would have kept him at a distance, rather than attracted him to her; but he felt bound, on his friend's account as well as her own, to leave no stone un-

turned to do her a service. Perhaps, too, he had secretly wished to make sure whether her feelings towards Vernon were such as he believed (and feared) them to be; if so, he had already satisfied, or rather convinced, himself upon that point. The way in which she had spoken, and still more, the way in which she had refrained from speaking, of his friend, had corroborated all his suspicions.

The sitting took place in the picture gallery, whither, with the rest of the painter's paraphernalia, the platform had been conveyed, which he found His Highness regarding with a certain solemn curiosity. Perhaps it reminded him of the scaffold on which so many of his ancestors and their adherents had perished. The remembrance grew still more striking when Mr. Felspar placed a chair there and requested his companion to take his seat upon it.

'Dear me! On that?' said His Highness, raising his dark eyebrows.

'If you please, sir. As I stand to paint and you sit, we shall then be on the same plane.'

His Highness shook his head, as well he might, the idea of his being on the same plane with anybody (not in Windsor Castle) being an absurdity. However, he did as he was bid, and was wound up by the winch, during which process he looked so indescribably droll (from horror at the liberty taken with him) that the operator was almost suffocated with suppressed laughter. On the other hand, when once at rest, and, as it were, enthroned, His Highness seemed very well satisfied with his position; indeed so much so that a look of majestic complacency stole over his features, which the painter would rather have died than have placed upon canvas. Of all his possible ancestors he looked most like James I. after he had written his last paragraph against tobacco, and put down (as he flattered himself) that noxious narcotic for good and all.

It was Mr. Felspar's method to talk to his sitters in a cheery manner, and, if possible, to induce them to talk to him, in order to get rid of that stony stare which sitters use, and which renders them more suitable for the sculptor than the painter; and this antidote to stiffness was never more necessary than on the present occasion.

'I hope you feel tolerably comfortable up there,' he said, as he arranged the brushes in his palette and took his station opposite the canvas. 'Some of my sitters object to the platform just at first; it has a certain formality.'

His Highness bowed in a manner that was more than formal; indeed, stately. To be compared and associated with other 'sitters' was most offensive to him; but Felspar only perceived that he was acquiescent, and proceeded to run on as usual in his pleasant professional way.

'One of my clients, indeed, objected to the platform more at last than at first. She was sitting for hands.'

‘Sitting for hands?’ echoed His Highness, astonishment for once overcoming his sense of dignity.

‘Yes; a model for hands only. I wanted a pair of very old ones. It was not very easy to get; for, of course, people of position will not sit for a whole afternoon with their hands before them for a fancy subject.’

‘So I should imagine,’ said His Highness, loftily.

‘On the other hand, picturesque old hands are difficult to find among the working classes. In Italy it is different, where the dryness of the climate and perhaps the comparative lightness of the common articles of food induce delicacy of frame; but in England rheumatism, and hard work, and gross feeding unite to make the hand of labour very unsightly. It struck me, however, that in the old women’s ward at some workhouse, I should find out of so great a number at least one hand—or rather, a pair of them—to suit my purpose. But it was a very melancholy show of hands, I do assure you. I never before had pictured to me in so material a shape the hard conditions of human existence as on that occasion.’

‘Poor things!’ murmured His Highness pitifully, as he looked at his own shapely digits; ‘it must have been a sad sight.’

‘So this pompous creature has a heart of his own,’ thought Felspar, and felt that he had been committing an injustice.

‘Yes, sir, the exhibition was sad enough. I chose, however, the best I could—an old woman of eighty—and asked if she would sit to me. The price I offered, though moderate enough, seemed to her a Golconda, and if she could she would have jumped at the offer. The sight of that platform frightened her at first immensely, but, with much persuasion and a great deal of physical difficulty, I got her into position; and, once there, she sat as quietly as yourself.’

His Highness frowned. Sympathy with the sorrows of his humbler fellow-creatures was one thing; to be compared with them was quite another. He looked doubtfully at the machine on which he sat, as though it must have needed a good deal of scrubbing, and perhaps hadn’t had it since it was occupied by ‘the model for hands.’

‘The old lady and I got on capitally,’ continued Felspar; ‘she told me, what you will be glad to hear, that herself and the other “elderly ladies,” as she called them, were well treated in the workhouse, and had little to complain of; in short, we both grew very communicative and great friends. Unfortunately, however, I was called out of the room, and had to talk with some person on business for some time, and on my return I found my old lady, arm-chair and all, upon the floor, crying out that she was killed and the platform bewitched. I had told her to sit quiet in my absence; but I suppose that curiosity had been too much for her, and she had moved the chair about as she stared at things till it rolled off. I could never persuade her to get up

again, and indeed she represented herself as so much damaged that I had to pay her a round sum in compensation. I hope,' concluded Mr. Felspar, with a significant smile at his present sitter, 'that such an accident will not occur again.'

His Highness gasped, but said nothing; the idea of *his* tumbling off the platform, chair and all, it was impossible for him to entertain.

The sublime repose of his sitter and the marked character of his features made Mr. Felspar's task a comparatively easy one; but the general effect of the picture must needs, he felt, be wooden, unless he could contrive to elicit some signs of animation. This is one of the disadvantages of painting strangers; the artist does not know what topic excites their interest, and has to shoot at a venture; he sometimes hits a tender spot.

'These are good pictures, sir,' said Felspar, looking round the gallery; 'are they family portraits?'

'They are,' said His Highness emphatically.

The other had not implied a doubt; though, if his companion had informed him he was the last of the Stuarts, he might possibly (as Vernon afterwards observed) have asked him to give an account of his stewardship.

'That lady yonder has a good deal of character in her face,' said Felspar, nodding carelessly at one of the portraits. 'As her attire puts it out of the question that she can be a very near relative, I may say that she looks as if she had a will of her own.'

It so happened that, beyond what her face showed, the lady in question had no character at all, not even to speak of: it was Miss Walkinshaw, the mistress of the Young Pretender.

'She had—a will of her own,' assented His Highness.

'So I should think,' said Felspar. 'The features of the gentleman by her side seem, somehow, familiar to me. It is very curious, by-the-bye, and shows the power of mere attire, how very seldom the portrait of a person of another era does suggest a likeness to any living person. Yet I could almost have sworn I had seen that man before.'

'It is the portrait of Prince Charles Edward,' observed His Highness loftily.

'Ah! An historical picture! Then that accounts for the effect it had on me. Directly I set eyes on it I felt inclined to say to myself, as one does, you know, "I remember your face, but if you'd give me the world I can't remember your name." Poor Charles Edward! there was a certain romantic attraction about him that lasts even yet, though he did his best to dissipate it. I suppose the Count de Chambord has a similar gift—to judge by the devotion of his adherents—of winning men's personal attachment. One does not, of course, admire his character—he must, for one thing, be as obstinate as a mule—but being the last of his ancient race—be so kind as to look a little more to the right,

sir—thanks—and finding himself getting on in years and childless—are you sure you are quite comfortable?’

The inquiry was suggested by a suppressed groan from His Highness.

‘Let me put this cushion behind you. Sitters often complain to me of a certain feeling of constraint—I suppose it’s indigestion. I feel it myself when I’m having my hair cut.’

‘Thank you, sir; the chair suits me very well,’ said His Highness. ‘Pray proceed.’

‘Talking of hair-cutting,’ continued Felspar, who, naturally a man of few words, always became anecdotal from habit when he had his brush in his hand; ‘I heard a curious story the other day about the Count de Chambord from a French barber. In 1848—of all the dates to choose from!—the Count tried to get up a little enthusiasm for hereditary monarchy. He held a sort of assembly at Brussels to which a delegate of each trade in Paris was invited, and my barber was one of them. I asked what he thought of Henri V., and he said Monseigneur was charming. The reception took place at the Count’s own house, it seems, but the delegates were quartered in the town wherever room could be found for them. At first my barber, who was a very simple young fellow, was overcome by the presence of royalty; but when, after all was over, he saw that His Majesty addressed a kind word to everybody, he took courage, and by the time it came to his own turn to be spoken to, he was quite himself.

“I hope, sir,” said the Count, “that you are comfortably located in Brussels?”

“Thank you, Monseigneur, pretty well; but since you are so kind as to inquire, there is one thing amiss that troubles me. In Paris I am accustomed to two sheets to my bed. At the Lion d’Or, here, they only give me one.”

“Monseigneur,” said the barber, “smiled, as if it were a joke, which to me it certainly was not, but assured me the omission should be rectified. And I am bound to say that that night I had two sheets to my bed.”

‘I am glad to add,’ smiled Felspar in conclusion, ‘that, touched by that instance of royal solicitude, my barber has remained a Legitimist ever since.’

Not a muscle moved in His Highness’s face; he could not have looked graver if his companion had been describing the execution of the last Bourbon by the guillotine.

‘The man has no humour,’ reflected Felspar. ‘He looks like King Log. What the deuce shall I do with him?’



## CHAPTER XLVI.

## THE SITTING CONTINUED.

I HAVE said that His Highness's motives in sending for Mr. Felspar to portray his features were not wholly selfish, but they were not quite, perhaps, so disinterested as he would have persuaded himself. As Yorkshiremen frankly confess of their native honesty, they were 'a little mixed.' It is possible that, so far as the picture went, His Highness's sole intention was to benefit posterity, but it was also obvious that a drawing-master might be, and was, a great acquisition to Miss Josceline. Mr. Felspar was of no sort of use in that capacity to his present employer. And yet there was a certain something which made that unfortunate artist tolerable to His Highness, even when thus taking Miss Walkinshaw for his ancestress, and speaking with levity of the divine right of kings. Nay, there was a reason, though unacknowledged even to himself, which led him to conciliate his companion; an operation easy enough to common folks animated by the desire to please, but which those who are accustomed to exercise patronage find (when that persuasive weapon is denied them) a very difficult job.

'Of all the arts, Mr. Felspar, it appears to me that painting—which of course includes drawing—is the most valuable: it rescues the dead from oblivion, and causes our ancestors and their achievements in a manner to live again.'

Of course a sentence like that is not hatched in a hurry nor delivered at random; and, indeed, His Highness uttered it with the greatest deliberation and after a protracted pause. It was intended, no doubt, to produce an impression, and it did produce it. It was some time before Felspar could reply with becoming gravity that the sentiments thus happily expressed were also his own. He should here have allowed time to elapse; but, not understanding that his companion was occupied in the composition of another remark of similar profundity, he went lightly on.

'At the same time, it must be confessed, sir, that it is not every one who regards the achievements of their ancestors upon canvas as a subject of pleasing contemplation. In a certain country mansion, for example, there used to hang over the dining-room mantelpiece an ancestral picture which gave the greatest offence to every living member of the family.'

'Then why didn't they take it down?' inquired His Highness with less curiosity than contempt, for he felt the coming anecdote to be an interruption.

'Because the law forbid it. The founder of the fortunes of

the house had enjoined on his descendants by will that it should always be there. It represented him in his shirt-sleeves employed in cutting out a pair of something with a pair of shears. He had, in fact, made his living as a fashionable tailor, and, foreseeing that his progeny would be ashamed of the art by which he had risen to eminence, he hit upon this happy corrective of their pride. If that picture were ever taken down, the house and lands were to be made over to the Tailors' Benevolent Association. Imagine the position of a would-be county family with such a record of their origin always before the eyes of their guests.'

His Highness lifted his eyebrows, to signify, perhaps, that he could imagine it.

'I was, however,' continued Mr. Felspar, 'the humble instrument of getting them out of their social difficulty. They took counsel's opinion; and it was decided that, as their respected ancestor had not precisely indicated how he was to hang on the wall, he might be turned with his face to it; and, as even then he might give rise to inquiry, I was employed to paint a picture on the back of the canvas. As the choice of subject was left to me, I gave them a crusader. When folks ask questions about it they say, "That is the founder of our family;" which, if not the literal truth, is within a quarter of an inch of it.' And Mr. Felspar threw back his hair with his favourite jerk in enjoyment of the reminiscence.

You may put a joke ever so broad right under some men's noses (as you may take to a river a horse), but you cannot make them see it. It would be an interesting speculation, except that it might lead to metaphysics, to inquire what it looks like to them.

In acknowledgment of this lively little contribution to the history of county families His Highness only bowed his head.

'Your particular branch of your profession, Mr. Felspar, doubtless brings you a good deal into connection with human nature; but there are other branches which I suppose may be cultivated in—ahem!—comparative seclusion.'

'Doubtless. Indeed, the greatest works of which my art can boast have been produced under such circumstances.'

'I was not, however, thinking so much of the art as of the artist,' observed His Highness thoughtfully. 'I was wondering whether a certain excellence could not be attained without studying in the schools—or—or—in fact being brought into connection with the outside world at all.'

'Very possibly, though it would be working under a considerable disadvantage; and in the case of one who takes up painting as his profession his income will not come to him; he must go out to look for it.'

'That would be quite unnecessary,' remarked His Highness emphatically, 'in the case I have in my mind.'

'You are interested in some amateur, I conclude. Well, of course, you will use your own judgment; but in my opinion a

young fellow is always better—a better painter as well as a better everything else—for seeing the world. The temptations of an artist's career are much exaggerated; they do not arise——'

'There is no need to speak of them in connection with this matter,' broke in His Highness with some curtness. 'The fact is, the case I had in my mind was that of a young lady; I suppose she would paint flowers and things?'

'Well, no,' said Felspar smiling; 'I cannot say that the gentler sex who paint—that is, who paint pictures—particularly affect flowers. Miss Josceline, for example, as I believe you are aware, has a special turn for figure drawing.—Would you be kind enough to look up a little?'

For His Highness's eyes had drooped, and were fixed upon his feet. He looked up, but not at his interlocutor, whose glance, indeed, with a strange forgetfulness of the purpose of their companionship, he seemed studiously to avoid.

'Have you known Miss Josceline long?'

'No; indeed only a few weeks; but circumstances have rather thrown us together. Life at the *Ultramarine* is very social, and until her father's death we met pretty frequently.'

'She made a favourable impression on you, doubtless?'

As His Highness spoke his dusky cheek glowed with colour, which was reflected on that of his companion.

'It is impossible it could be otherwise,' answered Felspar gravely. 'Her gentleness and modesty won their way to every heart.'

'She is very beautiful,' returned the other, in a voice that for him was very soft and low.

'Her beauty, sir, is the least of her attractions,' answered Felspar, the scarlet in his cheek growing still more pronounced. There was an indignation in his tone which the other did not notice, so wrapped he appeared to be in his own reflections.

'Her father, though of high birth, was not quite—exactly what we could have wished, was he?'

'Well, sir, he is dead, so that we will not discuss his frailties; but in my opinion he was certainly not worthy of such a daughter.'

'Just so; that is what I have heard,' continued His Highness. 'It was, on the whole, a happy release.'

'She does not think so,' answered Felspar, very busy with his brush and speaking with some vehemence. 'It can scarcely be considered a fortunate circumstance for her that she has become orphaned and almost friendless, dependent (for the present at least) upon charity.'

'Sir!' exclaimed His Highness, with a flash of anger from his dark eyes.

'I was wrong, I confess, to use such a term,' admitted Felspar. 'I should have said dependent upon the hospitality, however generous, of a stranger. Such a position, I think, does not afford much ground for congratulation.'

'That is true,' mused the other. 'I trust, however, that she feels no sense of dependence here; it has been my particular desire to do away with that.'

'Miss Josceline spoke of your consideration for her in the most grateful terms,' said Felspar gently. The other's evident genuineness of feeling had touched him.

'You alluded to her as being friendless,' continued His Highness after a long pause, 'as if with some particular reservation.'

'What I meant to imply was,' said Felspar, 'that for a young lady in her position in life she was almost alone in the world. She has friends—fast friends, I hope—though they are few in number.'

'Just so; and only one relation, who knows nothing about her. I am putting these questions to you, Mr. Felspar, as you may be very sure, only for the young lady's good. In the—the arrangements which I may be able to make for her future benefit. I must be guided by facts; and, you see, I am not in possession of them. I may take it for granted, for example—may I?—that she has no sort of attachment or engagement?'

'Have you heard of anything of that kind, sir?' said Felspar quickly.

'Well, a hint has been dropped. There was a Mr. Aird, it seems.'

'That is preposterous!' exclaimed Felspar. 'The idea, you must permit me to say, is most offensive. Mr. Aird is an excellent fellow, a true gentleman, and, I happen to know, would shrink from such a suggestion. He is old enough to be Miss Josceline's father.'

His Highness's dusky face began to glow again.

'There were circumstances, as I understood, which made such a match unbecoming,' he murmured slowly. 'A great inequality of birth, for instance.'

'Yes, indeed; nearly half a century.'

'I was speaking more particularly of blood,' observed the other coldly. 'However, it is sufficient to be assured that the report is mere gossip. We shall now know how to proceed.'

'I thought from the arrangement you made with me respecting her studies,' observed Mr. Felspar, pausing in his work and regarding his companion very fixedly, 'that you were already in possession of Miss Josceline's views.'

'I have heard from her aunt, Miss Burt, that it is her romantic intention to earn her living by her pencil. It was in fact her case—under the guise of a supposititious one—that I have just been putting to you.'

'I understand,' answered Felspar thoughtfully, and in a gentler tone. 'My replies to your questions, it is true, were not very encouraging; but to some minds a dinner of herbs, you know, under certain conditions, is more grateful than the stalled ox.'

'I hope Miss Josceline will never be reduced to the former alternative,' observed His Highness, knitting his brows. One would have thought that Mr. Felspar had pictured her with a bit of bread and a raw onion.

'I hope so, too,' said Felspar, far from displeased at the other's indignation. He was now persuaded—and the conviction gave him great comfort—that this stately personage, probably for Miss Burt's sake rather than her own, was about to place himself, as respected Miss Josceline, *in loco parentis*.

His good humour seemed to communicate itself to his companion, over whose features for the first time stole a gracious complacency.

The artist began to entertain hopes that his sitter would not be a lay figure after all.

'These are beautiful flowers,' he said presently, pointing to some rich spoils from the conservatory with which Miss Burt had adorned the room that morning to grace His Highness's 'sitting.'

'Yes; I am vastly fond of them. They seem to me to speak a language, nay, to possess a sort of silent music, of their own; their fragrance and their colour harmonise together like the voice and the instrument.'

What was it that had suddenly made His Highness not only so gracious, but also so poetical? Mr. Felspar looked at him with bewilderment.

'Yes; flowers, as you say, have a sort of speech, though not always. I remember an instance of their being unfortunately dumb—your expression is all I could wish, but be so good as not to hold your head quite so high—I call it the story of the fatal bouquet. A very old gentleman was sitting one evening by a winter-fire with a very old lady; she had been giving a party and he was a lingering guest. They had known one another all their lives.

"Ah," said he; "how pleasant it is to be alone with you, Lilian!"

"I like nothing so much, George," she answered quietly.

"Then why did you not marry me?"

"A flush stole over the old lady's grey and wrinkled face.

"Because you never asked me," she answered simply.

"Nay, but I did!" he exclaimed; "I asked you forty years ago in this very room at your mother's birthday ball."

"She shook her head very sadly. "Never, George."

"Not by words; I am too shy for that. Did I not give you a bouquet?"

"Yes."

"Well, I should have hoped the flowers might have spoken for me; but I gave you a letter."

"A letter!"

"Yes; it was wrapped up in the bouquet. I told you in it how I loved you; how, even if you refused my hand, I could not



bear to be separated from you. If I were denied your love, I still wished to retain your friendship. 'Therefore,' said I, 'if your answer is "No," say nothing; I shall understand silence, and bow to your decision; and then we can meet together as we always have done, and you shall never be annoyed with importunities.'"

"I never got that letter, George," answered the old lady; "there must have been some dreadful mistake. But I have kept the bouquet."

"What! all these years?"

"She went to her desk and fetched it. It was a mere collection of dead sprigs such as one sees in an herbarium; the stalks were in a gilt handle, and the letter, of the existence of which she had never dreamt, was wrapped around them.

'Imagine,' said Felspar, pathetically, 'how these two old people must have looked at one another!' Then with a smile he added, 'The moral is, I suppose, that in putting *billets doux* into bouquets, one shouldn't put them into the handles.'

'Nay,' said His Highness, whom this anecdote seemed to interest as none of the others in his companion's *répertoire* had done; 'the moral seems to me that the gentleman should have spoken for himself.'

'And not have waited five-and-forty years to do it?' laughed the other.

'Just so. In love affairs there should be as little delay as possible,' said His Highness. 'And now, Mr. Felspar, I think we will adjourn the sitting.'

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### TABLE-TALK.

As Ella was getting ready for dinner that day, Aunt Hester dropped in as usual. She had little time, except in the evening, to be with her niece; for the household at Barton was large, and she 'looked into everything' herself, and never omitted a duty.

'Well, my dear, I am glad to say His Highness has quite taken to Mr. Felspar. I confess that I am agreeably disappointed, for I was afraid they would not be very congenial.'

'I was afraid of that, too; Mr. Felspar is so natural,' said Ella naïvely. 'Did you tell him beforehand all about—' she could not even yet prevent a little hesitation in giving her host his title—'all about His Highness?'

'No; I thought it better not; I only hinted at it, as in your case.'

'He would think it so droll,' mused Ella.

Aunt Hester looked very grave; the subject was one in which she not only saw no joke herself, but very much disapproved of

others seeing it. Well, at all events he seems to have behaved himself very becomingly, and His Highness seems very pleased with him.'

'Did he tell you so?'

'No. But I know it, because Mr. Heyton has been abusing Mr. Felspar, which is a sure sign his patron likes him. He is jealous of everybody who wins his regard.'

'I hope he is not jealous of me,' said Ella smiling. She was in better spirits than she had been since her father's death, partly from having met her old friend again, and partly from the hopes he had given her of success in her future calling; and, indeed, the result of his first lesson had been very satisfactory.

'No; Mr. Heyton is not jealous of you at present,' said Aunt Hester thoughtfully.

'Perhaps he thinks he has no reason to be,' observed Ella; 'that his patron has not "taken to me" as you say he has to Mr. Felspar.'

Aunt Hester shook her head with a certain mysterious significance, and changed the subject.

'Our little dinner-party is increasing,' she said. 'Of course Mr. Felspar dines with us, and His Highness has announced his intention of doing so.' From the tone in which she stated it, the latter fact was evidently of great importance in Aunt Hester's eyes.

'Very good,' said Ella; 'only it's a pity I have no diamonds to wear in honour of such occasions.'

'He likes flowers better than anything,' replied Aunt Hester with simplicity. 'Here is another camellia for your hair, my dear.'

Ella could hardly suppress a smile at the gravity of demeanour with which Aunt Hester fixed it.

It was rather curious to remark at dinner that Mr. Felspar, ordinarily so taciturn, and also the latest guest, was the most talkative of the company; but Ella guessed, and guessed perhaps rightly, the reason. The stately way in which the repast was conducted, and the deference paid to the host (especially in the matter of his being helped before the ladies), somewhat jarred upon the artist's feelings, and caused him in a manner to assert his independence. He even made a point (in which, however, he had perhaps another reason) of continuing a conversation with Mr. Heyton, which had been begun before they sat down to table.

'I should like,' he said, 'to know who told you that story about the Spanish cloak found with the skeleton at the *Ultramarine*.'

'Well; I heard it on pretty good authority,' said the other stiffly.

'It must have been very good authority if the statement is to counterbalance mine,' observed Felspar, 'since I was present when the bones were found, and there was no cloak.'

‘I heard the story, though it is true at secondhand, from one of the servants at the hotel,’ said Mr. Heyton. ‘One would have thought she ought to know.’

The remark was a rude one; but the tone in which it was delivered was studiously polite and gentle, and, as often happened, did not reach His Highness’s ear.

Ella heard it, however, with great satisfaction; she remembered that she had confided to Mrs. Wallace about little Davey’s fright, and the apparition which she herself had imagined she had witnessed, and doubtless that lady had indiscreetly repeated the matter to one of the servants. So, allowing for the exaggeration of tradition, half the structure of her supernatural experience was at once swept away.

‘Foolish as such stories are,’ continued Felspar, ‘they have often an influence upon people’s actions; as I was telling Miss Josceline, a common friend of ours has been actually frightened away from Wallington Bay by the discovery of the handful of bones.’

‘But it was upon poor little Davey’s account, and not on his own, that he was frightened,’ observed Ella.

‘I envy this gentleman his champion,’ said His Highness gravely. ‘Who was he?’

‘It was a Mr. Aird, sir,’ explained Ella; ‘the father of the child of whom we were speaking the other day; a most charming little fellow, is he not, Mr. Felspar?’

‘Delightful. There was a new arrival the other day at the hotel whom Davey had caught sight of, and we asked him what he was like. He said he had white hair and bay legs. He had heard the window of the *salle-à-manger* called indifferently a bay and a bow, and naturally supposed the terms to be synonymous.’

The ladies laughed; but His Highness maintained a majestic demeanour, as he always did during the recital of anything humorous, and Mr. Heyton looked at him in sympathetic contempt of such frivolity.

‘You will be sorry to hear, Miss Josceline,’ continued Mr. Felspar, ‘that there was quite a little breeze between the good Professor and Mr. Aird the other day. Mrs. Armytage was indisposed, and did not dine at the *table-d’hôte*, and, taking advantage of her absence, her husband had a bottle of champagne all to himself, which made him didactic. The conversation turned upon “Instinct,” and the Professor grew not only eloquent in its favour, but rather oppressive. “After all,” he said, “who can define Reason?” Then he looked round as if inquiring of the Spirit of the Universe, “What is Reason? Who can define Reason?”’

“Advertise,” said Mr. Aird; “that is the only method of getting at these important facts.”

‘The poor Professor!’ exclaimed Ella. ‘If you knew what a gentle, kind, old man he is, you would feel sorry for him, Aunt Hester.’

It was the first time that she had addressed Miss Burt as her aunt in Mr. Heyton's presence ; but, as she knew that he was aware of their relationship, she thought it better to make no further show of concealment of it ; moreover, Mr. Felspar, who knew no reason to the contrary, might have alluded to it at any moment. She was sorry to observe, however, that Miss Burt looked very uncomfortable at being thus familiarly appealed to, and that the secretary was obviously enjoying her embarrassment.

'The champagne that excited your friend so much, Mr. Felspar, observed the latter presently, 'was scarcely so good as what you are drinking now, I reckon.'

'I dare say not,' returned Felspar, carelessly. 'Like most people, I know good wine from bad ; but not good wine from very good.'

'I suppose the gentlemen of your calling have not many opportunities of recognising that nice distinction. Now this is the very best Brut.'

'Brute, indeed !' murmured Miss Burt under her breath.

And Ella turned crimson.

Felspar, taking all this in at a glance, threw back his hair (looking more like an angel on a gargoyle than ever), and, in tones even more mellifluous than his antagonist, replied : 'I will take your word for it, Mr. Heyton ; and, indeed, the wine seems very dry. It is more wholesome so, no doubt ; but I continue to think it an affectation to pronounce it more agreeable to the palate. Two very rich men of my acquaintance, who I am happy to say suffered from gout, were dining together at their club. They had ordered, as usual, a bottle of the best Brut champagne—only one per cent. of sugar in it, &c., &c.—and even that they drank in fear and trembling.

'“I don't think I have tasted anything like this for years,” said one.

“It is delicious !” concurred the other. “Don't you think we might order—eh ?—just another pint ?”

“Well, being Brut, it can't hurt us, can it ?”

“They both knew that it could ; but it was ordered.

“Then the wine steward came, with a grave face.

“I am very sorry, gentlemen ; but there has been a slight mistake. The champagne you have been drinking was not exactly sweet and perfectly sound ; but scarcely Brut—it was Perrier Jouet's third quality, at 30s. a dozen.”’

Ella laughed aloud ; Aunt Hester echoed her mirth, not that she quite understood the point of the story, but because she perceived the secretary had somehow got the worst of it ; and even His Highness condescended to smile.

'Your friends must have been singularly lacking in observation,' observed the secretary—a remark the feebleness of which evinced his chagrin.

'Nay, not so ; it was simply that they preferred, like every one else, the sweet to the bitter. As to observation, very few people have any to be called such. A great oculist told me that a patient once came to him for a weakness of his right eye. He was not a young man, but still not so old that age could have affected his eyesight.

"I think," he said, "the failure of my vision must come from a bad habit I have of reading in bed."

'The oculist examined him carefully, and agreed that it was so.

"You must not do any night work," he said. Then he added carelessly, "Do you never find anything wrong with the left eye?"

"None," replied the patient ; "my left eye is quite strong."

"Well ; it is my duty to tell you, because it will make you more careful, that you never saw with your left eye in your life. There is a malformation at the back of it."

"Impossible !"

"Close your right eye."

'There was darkness. The patient had been blind with his left eye all his life, and never discovered it.'

'Then he never could have winked,' sneered Mr. Heyton.

'Your remark, my dear sir, proves how deficient you are in observation yourself,' observed Felspar smiling ; 'otherwise you would have remarked that nine people out of ten who indulge in that reprehensible practice wink with the left eye.'

Mr. Heyton's rejoinder was only a smile of contempt—a weapon which, like the half of a pair of shears, is not of itself very effective, but demands that some one else should be sympathetically scornful. The secretary, however, was not the man to own himself vanquished, even in anecdote ; but at once began to descant (very much *à propos des bottes*, as it seemed) upon a curious Anglo-French marriage case that had that day appeared in the newspapers. An Englishman had, in his own country, married a young Frenchwoman of twenty-two, against the consent of her parents. By the French law, though, of course, not by the English, their consent is necessary up to the age of twenty-five, when the bride may 'denounce' them, as it is termed, and take her own way. The marriage was therefore pronounced by the French courts illegal. With some humour Mr. Heyton pointed out how it was therefore possible, even in these days, for a man to have a lawful wife in England and another in France, which (for those who were sticklers for formality) must be very convenient.

To judge by the narrator's countenance—which throughout had sought that of his patron—he had not reckoned, as regards the success of his story, without his host. Yet all that it drew from His Highness was a frigid bow of acknowledgment.

'The news from France,' he said, 'had to my mind to-day a far more interesting item in the decease of the Marquis du Val-



Dieu, the last of the body-guard of Charles X. He died at the age of seventy-eight, in a manner the most becoming conceivable for one of his rank and lineage—from the rupture of an aneurism, as he was stooping to kiss the hand of the Countess Dowager de la Tour d’Auvergne.’

And, as if affected beyond measure by this romantic incident, His Highness rose with even greater dignity than usual, and retired to his private apartments.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### MR. HEYTON SHOWS HIS HAND.

AUNT HESTER and Ella had some conversation that evening in private, as before, upon what had taken place at the dinner-table; and the latter remarked upon the ill-will evinced by the secretary towards Mr. Felspar.

‘It is as I told you,’ was the other’s quiet reply; ‘Mr. Heyton will have no one near the throne but himself. That His Highness likes your friend is a good reason why the secretary should hate him; and he has always a difficulty in concealing his hate.’

To this Ella answered nothing. She thought there must be some more particular reason for the exhibition of Mr. Heyton’s spleen; but she was unwilling to provoke her relative to speak upon the topic.

‘What astonishes me is that so clever a man as you tell me (and I do not doubt it) Mr. Heyton is, should make such blunders. He must know that, as a *raconteur*, Mr. Felspar is his superior; yet he attempted to rival him in his own line. Why on earth should he have brought in that French marriage story by the head and shoulders?’

‘Oh! you noticed its inappropriateness, did you? Well, he had meant to tell it on the first opportunity, but none occurred. As to why he told it at all, I think I know; for in everything he does he has an object.’

‘And a bad one,’ put in Ella slyly.

‘Of course, a bad one,’ assented Aunt Hester simply. ‘In this case he wished to evoke the expression of some levity of principle from a certain person, in order that you might be disgusted with him.’

‘Why, he must be a perfect Jesuit!’

‘He is a deal worse than that, my dear.’

The statement tripped so naïvely from Aunt Hester’s tongue that Ella could not help laughing.

‘But, my dear aunt, why should Mr. Heyton want me to be disgusted with an old friend like Mr. Felspar?’

'It was not Mr. Felspar he had in his mind; but that is no matter,' added Miss Burt confusedly, 'and especially since it seems he has failed in his object.'

However quietly the wheel of life ordinarily moved at Barton Castle, it was certainly just now not without excitement in the way of antagonism. Not only did Miss Burt never cease to deliver her testimony against the secretary, and the secretary to exhibit his jealousy against Mr. Felspar, but the latter himself appeared to be somewhat imbued with the notion of partisanship, and whenever in these rapier passes he was accustomed to exchange with Mr. Heyton he could poke that gentleman in a tender spot, he did so. Indeed, if it was not made plain to His Highness, on Mr. Felspar's showing, that the secretary was a humbug, it was from no fault of the exhibitor. But upon this point His Highness was not to be moved, or even touched. That his own secretary should not be genuine in his protestations of respect and reverence for himself and his position, was in fact inconceivable to him; and this confidence in his personal dignity extended to his opinions, which, notwithstanding their peculiarity, he could not imagine were open to ridicule, and far less a temptation to it. In this respect, however, his obtuseness sometimes scored for Mr. Felspar as much as for his enemy. On one occasion, for example, when the secretary had introduced the subject of the martyrdom of that admirable sovereign Charles I., the artist had been so imprudent as to remark that not only from the natural depravity of human nature there were two opinions about that historical event, but to instance the case of the Wilsons of Plymouth, the female members of which family Northcote describes as 'going about with their fans out, prim and puffed with pride,' because they were the lineal descendants of Bradshaw the regicide.

'I never heard of anything more blasphemous,' observed the secretary with a side glance at his patron, who, indeed, looked displeased enough.

'At the same time,' continued Felspar drily, 'it is only right to add that it was the local belief that all who belonged to the family in question perished from bleeding at the nose.'

'Ah!' exclaimed His Highness with a sigh of relief; 'if there was a judgment which pursued such wretches, nothing more need be said against them.'

And Mr. Felspar was once more readmitted into favour.

So well content, indeed, was the tenant of the Castle with its latest guest that, after the portrait was finished, the artist was pressed to prolong his stay, which, notwithstanding the enmity of Mr. Heyton, he would have been very willing to do—but that he dared not. Never even in thought had he done disloyalty to his friend; but further familiarity with Ella, now that he had imparted to her the instruction of which she had stood in need, he felt would try him beyond his powers of resisting temptation. As

her tutor it was comparatively easy to maintain intimate relations with her without revealing his secret ; but merely as a friend the situation would be too perilous. He felt it in a thousand ways, but chiefly from the pain he experienced whenever she spoke of Vernon—and his own shame when he did so. He would have spoken of him himself had he any good news to give ; but Vernon's letters from town, which he received pretty frequently, only corroborated his own fears as to the young *littérateur's* chances of success.

'I feel, my dear Felspar,' he wrote, 'that the object I have in view, and which, alas ! is as dear to me as ever, is well-nigh hopeless.' (If he had but said 'quite hopeless' Felspar might have felt himself free, but that word 'well-nigh' was padlock and chain in one.) 'It is in vain that I try to believe that I shall one day make a mark in the world of letters ; I cannot so persuade myself. It is mere egotism to assert that perseverance, combined with a natural turn for this or that, is certain of success ; at all events it is not so in my trade. You may be sure I have no mock humility. It is by comparison with the works of the masters of my craft that I perceive—and I need not say how unwillingly—my own shortcomings. Yet what seems very curious—and, if one is to believe what one reads, is certainly contrary to experience—I love my craft none the less. I had rather be a door-keeper in the temple of literature than be lodged in the tents of the law, though they be of silk.'

At this characteristic reference to the habiliments of a Queen's Counsel Felspar could not repress a smile. It did seem odd that, with so strong an instinct for humour, the expression of it (in commercial value) should be denied his friend. 'Do not imagine I am downhearted on my own account ; I shall never need to live on oatmeal or sleep in a garret. With my simple tastes I could always maintain myself in comfort, but I shall never "rise from the ranks ;" the grade of a non-commissioned officer is the most I shall attain to. In a word, it seems well-nigh hopeless that I shall ever be in a position to ask one who has been brought up in luxury to link her lot with mine. Judge, then, how almost impossible it seems that I should fulfil the conditions to which, in an evil hour, as I sometimes selfishly think, I have pledged myself.' Then followed some details, more convincing even than the writer's arguments, of the hopelessness of his endeavours. It was not the case, as Felspar was persuaded, of powers that were still undeveloped and might attain any growth ; but that the man should see this himself made his conviction doubly strong. 'How is she ?' the letter concluded. 'Give her my—my kindest wishes for her success with her pencil. You are somewhat silent (for my sake I know) about her.' (Was it for Vernon's sake ? thought Felspar with a sudden flush ; but his conscience came to the rescue. Yes ; he had forborne to write much about Ella lest it should feed vain hope.) 'You can do me no harm, dear friend,

by writing of her; and it is the topic that interests me more than all others in the world.'

For the same reason that he had not written to Vernon of Ella, he had not talked to Ella of him. But twice she had asked him with a shy and hesitating voice whether he had had tidings of his friend; and then of course it had been necessary to say something—'He was getting on in literature, though slowly; was working with a diligence that at least deserved success, &c., &c.'

'That is better than gaining it without desert,' said Ella with enthusiasm; 'but I do so hope he will gain it.'

Altogether it had been a very trying time for Felspar at Barton, and it was with mixed feelings—regret at leaving Ella's sweet companionship and self-congratulation at escape from temptation—that he quitted the Castle.

His stay had been much longer than he had calculated upon. His Highness had been difficult to paint; but he had succeeded in producing a satisfactory likeness of him, even if that look of the eye, 'never worn in man nor bird, save in the eagle and Prince Charlie,' was not quite so striking upon canvas as it was understood to be in the original.

As to Ella, as we have said, he had performed his duties as a teacher to admiration. Her publishers had written warmly of the specimen illustration she had sent to them of Mr. Fortescue's poems, and their praise had given her heart and hope.

That was the very most she allowed herself to expect in life—to be of good courage. The dreams of happiness which the future permits some young maidens to indulge in were denied to her. But, with work in hand and decent wage in prospect, she was not despondent. Her recent visions of early competency had been dispelled partly by practical experience (for she found there was a limit to the production of good work), and partly by Felspar, who had felt compelled to mingle a little drab with his pupil's rose-coloured view of her calling. But her sombre apprehensions of being dependent upon others for the bread of life had vanished, leaving, so far, a blue sky.

Moreover, she had what girls call 'a good deal of fun about her;' no small portion of the divine gift (so rare in one of her sex) of humour. Thence it happened that while the 'goings on' of Mr. Heyton, as Miss Burt called them, filled that lady with righteous indignation, they rather amused Ella than otherwise. We are afraid that if her private collection of drawings had been examined, there would have been found a counterfeit presentment of the 'Secretary Bird'—which, despite its feathers, had a strong resemblance to a human being—in the act of making itself agreeable to a bigger bird, such as an eagle. That there was no such caricature of her patron and protector, however, we may be sure. Her consciousness that she herself got some fun out of Mr. Heyton, or the conviction that Aunt Hester was a little too hard upon him, or the recollection of his many defeats at the hands of Mr. Felspar,

caused Ella to treat him with a greater civility than his original behaviour to her had deserved. She was always polite to him unless he became extravagantly complimentary, when she could not always restrain her mirth. That 'action of the heart,' as she termed his impressive way of laying his hand upon that organ, was a little too much for her.

Perhaps Mr. Heyton misunderstood her civility, though it was, no more, and indeed rather less, than ladies are in the habit of using towards gentlemen in whose society they find themselves every day; perhaps he wilfully exaggerated it to himself; perhaps he was simply one of the most audacious and impudent of men, and from information received had become aware that there was no time to lose; but when Ella's stay at Barton had extended to two months or so, this happened:—

She was walking in the park one morning as her custom was, before breakfast, and had extended her ramble further than usual to that hill behind the walled garden which, as we have said, commanded a view of the sea. She had not visited its shores, though it lay so near, since she had come to the Castle, and the sight of it awakened within her many memories. From all whom she had known when she dwelt by it she was separated by death or distance; and, save one or two affectionate letters from Mrs. Wallace (always reiterating the hope of one day seeing her in her Devonshire home), she had heard from none of them.

The kindness and consideration with which she was treated at Barton left nothing to be desired in that respect; and yet she felt a prisoner and an exile. She had just uttered a deep sigh when she was startled by a voice close beside her.

'Prithee, why so pale, Miss Ella?'

And there stood Mr. Heyton with his plump white hand upon his heart, like some Mr. Smoothtongue in an allegory.

She tried to look as if it were the suddenness of his appearance and not his personal presence that alarmed her, but the fact was she felt very uncomfortable. On the only occasion (which we have described) that she had been alone with him she had had reason to feel relieved at the intervention of a third person, and such an event, at the spot where they now stood, was not to be hoped for. Moreover, there was a certain expression in his face, at once resolute and tender, which she had never seen there before, and which she didn't like.

'You are looking both sad and serious, Miss Ella,' he said in reply to her polite but frigid 'Good morning; 'I hope there is nothing the matter.'

'Nothing at all,' she answered, forcing a smile, 'except that the beauty of the morning has tempted me too far, and I fear I shall be late for breakfast.'

And she turned as if to retrace her steps.

'One moment, Miss Ella; you have plenty of time, I do assure you, and I must ask the favour of a few words with you.'



She faced him at once; and bowed with the stateliness of Queen Elizabeth.

‘I, too, have been tempted by beauty—though not of the morning,’ he said softly, ‘and by a hundred other attributes more precious than beauty, to follow and seek you here.’

‘Sir!’

‘Pray excuse me if I express myself too much to the purpose, Miss Josceline,’ he continued earnestly. ‘My opportunities are rare, and I must take advantage of this one while it lasts to have my say.’

‘Pardon me, but I prefer to go home,’ said Ella icily.

‘And so you shall when you have heard me.’

If he had added ‘and not before’ his words could not have expressed a more fixed determination.

‘From the first day that you came under this roof, Miss Josceline, I have adored you. In a thousand ways of which you have never guessed, it has been my design and delight to make your residence here agreeable to you. You will say, perhaps, that my goodwill has not extended to your friends. That I show myself antagonistic to your aunt, I admit; but you must allow that it is difficult for me—being human—to act otherwise. She has poisoned your mind against me as much as possible, I know; but let that pass; I appeal from her to the justice of your own nature. I was also very rude on some occasions to your friend Mr. Felspar. I admit it, nay, I glory in it, for it arose from jealousy; I thought at one time that you entertained for him a warmer feeling than mere friendship. I was mistaken, and I am very glad of it.’

‘Indeed!’ If he had been water her tone would have frozen him; unfortunately he was fire, or nearly so. His voice was freighted with unmistakable passion.

‘I say, though I had but little hope that I had touched your heart, it pleased me to find that another had failed to do so; that, in a word, you were fancy free. It is so, is it not!’

Ella’s face grew scarlet.

‘I consider such a question, Mr. Heyton, most impertinent.’

‘Nay; pardon me, it may be imprudent, but it is most pertinent. You are young, it is true; but you possess an intelligence far beyond your years, and it is to that as much as to your gentle heart that I address myself. You imagine, doubtless, that I am dependent like yourself; that my future hangs upon the will of our common patron, as he considers himself. That is not so. I have laid by sufficient to offer you a comfortable, nay, a luxurious home. If you find existence here insupportable—as, if I mistake not, you are beginning to feel it—there is no need to prolong it. Do you hear me?’

‘I hear you, Mr. Heyton, but perforce. Do you think it a manly or chivalric act to compel me to listen?’

‘It may not be chivalrous, but it is natural, my dear Miss Ella,’

answered the secretary naïvely, 'and under the circumstances it is necessary. If, as I was saying, you are tired of this gilded cage, I can promise you liberty; leisure to pursue your favourite employment, and, if not opulence, competence. But if you have the patience to stay here a little longer on our present footing, I too, though it will cost me much (here he looked so languishing that it reminded her afterwards of the Secretary Bird about to moult), will have patience likewise; and the result of it will be a golden harvest to us both. Your aunt imagines that she has some influence with that fanatic fool who dreams he is my master; it is scarce worth speaking of, but what little she has can be utilised for our common benefit; but I am his *alter ego*—nay, he only sees what I choose to show him, and through the spectacles, as it were, that I place upon the bridge of his nose. I can wind him thus—round my little finger. It is I alone who have the Rarey secret to tame and turn this hereditary mule.'

He spoke with a contempt impossible to be conveyed in words, yet not more scornfully than Ella answered him.

'You seem to forget that you are speaking of your benefactor; be so good, at least, as to remember that he is also mine.'

'I will; I do,' answered the secretary, swallowing something, as it seemed, of considerable size in his throat. 'Nay, I am not unwilling, believe me, to make allowances for the person in question. One may know, it has been said, when a man has no elder brother by looking at the lobes of his ears; and there are other signs. His Highness, as he calls himself, I admit, has never had a fair chance of finding his level. But the airs and graces of this mock monarch—the affectations of this arch impostor—'

'He is not an impostor,' put in Ella quickly; 'he believes in his own pretensions.'

'But do *you* believe in them?'

There was a short pause, during which they confronted one another very steadily.

'You know I do not,' she answered presently. 'But if he is no prince he has some princely attributes; generosity, for example, and confidence in the loyalty of those about him.'

Into the secretary's pasty cheeks stole a spot of red like the cherry that through the closed tart indicates the nature of the fruit within; that last sentence of Ella's, delivered word by word as slowly as a physician drops his poison, had found its way to his conscience.

'So that is the way the wind blows, is it?' he answered with a venomous look. Then, suddenly altering his tone to one of earnest persuasion, he added: 'Is it possible that you are really sincere about this high and mighty personage? Do you know that the woman from whom he falsely claims his descent—the Princess of Stolberg—had a lover, the painter Alfieri, even in her husband's lifetime; and left her money on her death-bed to a

second? One like you I should think would be scarcely proud of such an ancestry even if it were genuine. As to himself, our patron is like enough to the Stuarts in some ways to deserve a more legitimate origin; he is, for one thing, selfishness personified; his weakness for the sex reminds one of the Young Pretender; his self-willed obstinacy——'

'Sir, I have heard enough, and more than enough,' interrupted Ella vehemently. 'To listen further to such an ingrate would be to share his baseness.'

'Perhaps you mean to tell His Highness what I have been saying,' observed the secretary with a cold smile. 'To crush the man who has laid his heart bare to you in a moment of love, and to build her own fortunes on his ruin, is an idea that would recommend itself to some women.'

'It does not recommend itself to *me*, sir. You may thank—well, a feeling that you do not understand, and in whose existence you probably disbelieve—that your shameful secret is safe with me.'

'That is very kind of you,' he answered cynically, 'and also perhaps on the whole judicious. Let me advise you to show an equal prudence in other matters. You are well born, or what the world calls such' (although he said not a word of it she knew he was here alluding to her father's character), 'and you are fairly good-looking. Beyond these advantages, Miss Josceline, you have not much reason for pride. Take the advice of a friend and do not encourage it; or it will have a fall. Above all, do not fly at too high game, or it will be your ruin.'

With that he turned his back on her sharply and walked homeward with a quick step.

She followed him slowly, overcome with wonder and a vague apprehension.

That morning—under pretence, or rather on the plea, of indisposition, for her nerves were all unstrung—she breakfasted in her own room. She had scarcely finished her meal when Aunt Hester entered in a state of suppressed emotion.

'How do you feel now, my darling?'

'I am better, much better, thank you.'

'That's well,' she said; 'you look so. Quite yourself, indeed. Oh, my dear, there has been some dreadful scene between His Highness and Mr. Heyton; I am sure of it, and also that Mr. Heyton got the worst of it, for he has been quite civil to me all breakfast time.'

Ella's smile was such a forced one, that the other could hardly have failed to notice it had not her mind been preoccupied.

'And that is not all,' she continued, almost breathless with excitement; 'His Highness has begged me to inquire whether you will do him the favour of giving him five minutes' conversation in his own room.'

## CHAPTER XLIX.

## COPHETUA.

It was probable that Aunt Hester looked for some expression of surprise, if not of pleasure, from her niece in reply to the very important intimation (as she considered it) which she had just communicated to her: 'His Highness wishes to have five minutes' private conversation with you in his own room.'

But Ella only smiled and answered indifferently, 'Very well; shall I go at once?' She took it for granted that the secretary had done her some ill turn already with his patron, and she wished to hide the fact from her relative, to whom she knew it would cause anxiety and apprehension.

'I shouldn't wonder if it was upon some serious matter,' remarked Aunt Hester, in indirect rebuke of this levity of tone. 'It is a very unusual proceeding on His Highness's part.'

'I suppose it is,' said Ella, turning, girl-like, to the mirror to see that all was right with her hair; 'I hope he doesn't want me to sing to him at this time in the morning; for if my voice cannot boast of much similarity to the nightingale, it is still less like the lark. I had a long walk before breakfast, and I feel rather tired.'

'You don't *look* tired,' replied Aunt Hester, admiringly; 'but I am sure His Highness doesn't want you to sing. You'll be very kind to him, won't you, dear,' she added with earnest tenderness, 'and not speak in a hurry and without thinking—that is, I mean, reflecting?'

'Speak in a hurry!' replied Ella, with astonishment; 'I never did such a thing with His Highness in my life. When he addresses me I always feel as if we were dancing a minuet together—"the mutual worship of conscious grace." You know he is not exactly the sort of person to dance a gallopade with.'

'My dear Ella, how you talk—even at a moment like this too! And yet you never seem to annoy him. Now pray be careful, my darling—and God bless you and guide you aright!' added Aunt Hester beneath her breath, as she bent down and kissed her.

The earnestness and significance of the speaker's tone would certainly have arrested Ella's attention had not her mind been already occupied with her own views of the coming interview. She returned her aunt's embrace, and left the room with a cheerful nod; but as she knocked at the door of His Highness's room

she felt her heart go pit-a-pat with a consciousness of some sort of ordeal befor her. Her pride, however, resented this feeling of apprehension, and came to her rescue just in time, so that she entered the apartment with an air which, in the eyes at least of its occupant, became her admirably. It was the same room in which she had had her first interview with His Highness, full of warm and mellowed lights from the stained glass; but instead of being in the alcove as before, His Highness was standing at the painted window, where a couple of chairs were placed.

He came forward with a grave but tender smile, and led her to one of them, but took no seat himself.

‘I have ventured to send for you, Miss Josceline, to speak upon a subject, dear and near to me, and important to both of us.’ Here he stopped, and Ella bowed a little stiffly; she was more certain than ever that the secretary had made some charge against her which, notwithstanding his confidence in him, the other’s sense of justice and kindness of heart had prevented him from taking for granted. She felt like one upon her trial, but conscious of innocence, and somewhat indignant, perhaps, at being the subject of any indictment.

‘You must forgive me, my dear young lady,’ continued His Highness, ‘if my speech does not chime as it should do with the meaning it would fain convey. I have been a lonely man for forty years, and from the “accident of birth,” as some foolishly term it’ (here he smiled complacently), ‘and still more from an exceptional position, I have lost the manner and the tone (if I ever possessed them) suitable to the circumstances in which I find myself.’ Here His Highness took a few steps up the room, and though her eyes did not follow him, she concluded from a certain rustling of paper that he was referring to some note of what he meant to say. ‘Up to this day, or perhaps I should rather say until you arrived beneath this roof, I had made up my mind to be content with my own lot, though it was a hard one—to live isolated from a world that refused to acknowledge me, or was ignorant of my claims, and to die the last of a long and kingly race, without an heir. But Fortune has been more kind to me than I expected of her. She has thrown in my way a young lady’—Ella looked up in great alarm, but His Highness had resumed his walk, and, unconscious of her movement, was again referring to his MS.—‘a young lady of good birth, of a beauty in my sight at least, and I think I may claim to have some judgment in such matters, as striking as that which distinguishes any female members of my own line (above all others though they be for grace of form and feature), and of manners and accomplishments which would do honour to any Court in Europe. Her father was the son of a nobleman; her mother, though boasting of no such lofty lineage, was, I am given to understand, very’—here his memory seemed to require another stimulus—‘yes, very respectably connected. Moreover, from circumstances which may or may not be regretted on other grounds,



but which, so far as regards myself, must be considered most fortunate, she has been separated from the other members of her family, and would therefore willingly enough—that is, I mean, would probably not be indisposed to share with me a life of seclusion. It is my intention to place my hopes, which, though small, she will admit to be sufficiently brilliant, and my heart, at that young lady's disposal; in a word, to make her my wife. I dare say, my dear Miss Josceline,' added His Highness with a smile, in which complacency and tenderness were strangely mingled, 'you may be able to make a guess as to who this young lady is.'

At this peroration, although of course she had long ago been aware whither all was tending, Ella was greatly agitated. The notion of an offer having been made to her, read aloud from a MS. like a speech in the House of Commons (though the opportunity had been denied to her of saying 'Divide, divide!') was so irresistibly droll that she had more than once to call to mind the generosity and consideration with which she had been treated by the speaker, to enable her to repress a smile; but, on the other hand, she was fully conscious of the compliment, nay, the honour, which in her companion's eyes he had conferred upon her. The words of her aunt, too, 'Don't speak in a hurry, without reflecting,' also rang in her ears, and this time with their full significance. Aunt Hester, it was now clear, had foreseen this, and was probably desirous that she should accede to His Highness's proposal. Nothing was further from her own intention; but at the same time she felt that she owed him much, and that to him at least her refusal would probably seem ungracious, as, by his manner, it would evidently be unexpected.

'I am deeply sensible,' she began in gentle but unhesitating tones, 'of the honour which your Highness' (there was no question now of giving him his loved title; she would have called him 'your Majesty' to have saved him a single pang) 'has designed to confer upon me.'

To her great relief—it felt like a reprieve—he here began to speak again, but this time out of his own head, and with less stateliness of style.

'That it would be so, my dear young lady,' he said, 'I had ventured to flatter myself. I foresaw—I will admit it—no disinclination to my proposal upon your part.'

Ella was about to remonstrate, as she well might, since he had evidently fallen into the error of taking her consent for granted; but he held up a jewelled finger for silence. 'There is, however, one impediment which would be fatal to my hopes; in the existence of it, indeed, I cannot—I will not—believe, unless I hear it from your own lips, but it has been suggested to me by another. I presume I may take it for granted that no lingering doubt remains in your own mind of the genuineness of my claim to be the last representative of the House of Stuart, the proofs of which lie in yonder desk.'

Under any other circumstances such a question would have been distressing indeed; but, as it was, Ella welcomed it as offering a way of escape from His Highness's proposition less painful and offensive than she could have hoped for.

'You hesitate,' he said suspiciously. 'I trust, I pray,' he added with great emotion, 'that you do not impute to me deception.'

'Indeed I do not,' interrupted Ella earnestly; 'your nature is, I am sure, incapable of it.'

'I do not wish to be complimented, Miss Josceline,' he answered slowly, 'at the expense of my forefathers. Do you doubt my own father's word, or the honour of my mother?'

'No, sir, no.'

'Where is the hitch, then?' he continued with vehemence, and a natural indignation in curious contrast with his former manner. 'Do you impugn the narrative of St. Rosalie?'

'It is a matter, your Highness,' replied Ella, plucking up all her courage, 'to which I have never given perhaps the serious attention it deserves; but I am obliged to confess, since you put the question so directly, that I am far from convinced——'

'That is enough, Miss Josceline,' interrupted His Highness haughtily. Then, after a moment's pause, he added with gentle earnestness, 'Forgive my impatience of manner; but upon this point I am so unused to contradiction, doubt, the least suspicion of scepticism. Let it be my task to convince you. Here are the documents, which (though lawyers have pretended to find a flaw in them) I will undertake to prove in any court in Great Britain, are incontestable, positive, infallible.'

'It would be time thrown away, your Highness,' returned Ella gently. 'I am no lawyer, but one cannot help the lack of faith.'

'Nevertheless it is a crime,' he returned gravely, 'punishable by everlasting death.'

'It is said so,' returned Ella gently, 'but I do not think your Highness believes'—here she smiled—'that matters will be pushed to that extremity. And if doubt is permissible, or let us say even excusable, upon a subject so momentous as that to which you make allusion, how much more pardonable surely should it be in respect to earthly things. Sir, believe me that I feel the obligations you have placed me under to their fullest extent. I shall be grateful to you as long as I live. But in this matter I must reserve to myself the right of private judgment.'

'And I the sense of self-respect, Miss Josceline. I do not flaunt my claim, but I will have it respected—at least by those about me.' (He did not say 'about my sacred person,' but his tone implied it.) 'I will not have in my own household——'

'Sir, that is sufficient,' said Ella, rising with dignity. 'I have received my "warning," and your Highness may depend upon it I shall not require a month's notice.'

The scorn that for one instant flashed from her eyes was keener than any glance of Prince Charlie's; the pride of her companion sank into insignificance beside it. But the next moment she bitterly repented of it.

'Your reproof is severe, but just, Miss Josceline,' said His Highness softly. 'I have behaved ill, and unlike a gentleman. I apologise and beg your pardon.'

'Nay, it is I who should ask pardon,' said Ella. 'My words were as unbecoming to myself as they were ungrateful to your Highness.'

'I forgive you upon one condition,' he said, in a voice trembling with emotion: 'that you do not address me by that title again. It will be only a very short time that we shall be together; for I know you will leave Barton now, let me say what I will.'

She bowed her head in acquiescence; she would certainly leave Barton, and that at once.

'Yes,' he went on, looking at her kindly, but very sadly, 'it is better so for both our sakes; and while you remain let us have no hypocrisies. Now, I know you are no hypocrite; but you have been compelled—it is no fault of yours, but mine—to play a part. Henceforth, young lady, be yourself; he must be a fool indeed who would wish you otherwise.' Here he sighed deeply, then added in his natural voice, 'Say nothing to Miss Burt of—of—what I said to you a while ago. It is sufficient, as she will understand, that you have the sin of unbelief.' Here he smiled very wofully. 'If ever it lies in my power to do you a service, command me. Believe me you will find Charles Edward, if no prince in your eyes, at least a cheerful giver. Do not weep, my dear young lady, or you will unman me. No; you must not kiss my hand again'—for as he held it forth she stooped to do so. 'Take it, not as an inferior, since you do not think yourself so, and not as I would have had you since that dream is over, but as the hand of a friend.'

And, as he spoke, such tears as are the best titles to honour, whether they are seen in prince or peasant, filled his eyes.

## CHAPTER L.

### DEPARTURE.

It was a sign of intense curiosity, recognisable by anyone acquainted with the nature of the sex, that when Ella returned to her own room and the company of her aunt, that lady did not put to her a single question. Her face, however, except that it had a deep trace of anxiety, was one long note of interrogation. She saw that Ella had been crying, of course; no extraneous art, nor

natural subtlety, can hide the fact of a woman having been in tears from another woman; but why these tears had been shed, or whether for joy or for sorrow, she could not guess. The first words of her niece, however, resolved her doubt, while they crushed her hopes.

‘Dear Aunt Hester, I am going away from you.’

‘Oh, Ella! Ella!’ wailed the old lady, ‘is it so bad as that? Are you really going to leave me?’

It somewhat surprised her niece, while it greatly relieved her, that she urged no argument against her going, but, without waiting for any reply to her question, simply sat down and covered her face with her hands.

‘Yes, darling, it must be so; you know it must be so,’ said Ella gently.

By a sorrowful movement of her grey head Aunt Hester made it plain that she knew that.

‘I felt—I feared it would be so. And yet, oh! Ella, for all his faults he would have made you a good husband.’

‘You are mistaken, Aunt Hester,’ said Ella, calling to mind her promise to His Highness, and eager to spare his pride. ‘I never refused him. Our disagreement—there had been no quarrel, mind; we have agreed to differ—was upon another matter, and he has behaved so nobly and so well.’

‘What other matter could have come between you?’ inquired Aunt Hester in astonishment, and taking no notice of the eulogium upon her beloved patron. ‘I have watched him, and seen things about which I thought I could never be mistaken, and felt sure he had asked you to become his wife.’

‘It was the old story,’ said Ella evasively. ‘He asked me point blank as to my belief in his ancestry, and I was obliged to tell the truth.’

Aunt Hester shook her head with a sad smile. ‘You are a good girl, a generous girl,’ she said significantly, ‘and I will put no more questions as to what has happened. Let us speak of the future. What is it you mean to do?’

‘I mean to go to Mrs. Wallace. I had a letter from her some days ago, reiterating, as usual, her kind invitation to Devonshire, and I shall now write to accept it.’

‘She is a kind woman, and has deserved it,’ answered Aunt Hester naïvely, as though speaking of some stroke of fortune. ‘But, oh! my darling, how I shall grudge you to her!’

Aunt Hester’s delicacy in not pressing her upon what had passed between herself and His Highness was a great comfort to Ella, and also that no suspicion seemed to have entered her mind that Mr. Heyton had had anything to do with the matter. She had no wish to widen the breach between her aunt and the secretary, nor to leave matters in any way worse at Barton than she had found them. As to exposing Mr. Heyton’s character to his patron, such a course was foreign to her nature; moreover,

she was well convinced that such an attempt would fail in opening His Highness's eyes to the true state of the case, though it might make him miserable by awakening his suspicions. What had happened between herself and the secretary she never disclosed even to her aunt, but it made her more eager for her own departure.

Of good Mrs. Wallace's willingness to receive her as a guest she had no doubt, and she had now some hope of being in a position not to be burdensome to her. She was earning something by her pencil, and had a little capital of her own after paying the expenses of her father's funeral and their final debts of about a hundred pounds. Dr. Cooper's account she had not paid, for the simple reason that he had refused to tender it, and, on her reiterated request for it, had written her a letter so full of tenderness and generosity that it was one of her most precious possessions.

The parting with Aunt Hester weighed heavily upon her mind, and to the last words with His Highness she looked forward with some distress and embarrassment; but otherwise she felt herself almost ungrateful at the little pain she experienced at the thought of bidding adieu to Barton. The fact was, that in spite of all the kindness and consideration with which she had been treated, or perhaps because of it, she could never get rid of that sense of dependence which was so unwelcome to her nature. What also filled her with self-reproach, though in a less degree, was the calmness with which she now contemplated leaving the last resting place of her father, which a few months ago had seemed to her so hard a trial. That very morning she began to make her simple preparations for departure; and the next, she resolved, should see her on her journey. It was better so for her own peace of mind, and, what she regarded more, for that of her host, whose pride she was well aware she had wounded to the quick, though not so seriously as she might have done had she declined the offer of his hand less indirectly. Aunt Hester, on the other hand, assumed His Highness had been rejected, and pictured him writhing under such pangs of wounded *amour propre* as could not be conceived of by an ordinary mortal, a mistake which had the fortunate effect of reconciling her to Ella's immediate flight. An interview, however, she herself had with her patron puzzled her a good deal. For a rejected suitor she found him very calm, though by no means cold. He spoke of her niece in such terms of eulogy as had never passed his lips even when speaking of his ancestry, and pressed upon her, for Ella's acceptance—'as a small token of our esteem, and in acknowledgment of' (he could hardly have said her 'services,' since they had been confined to arranging the flowers on the dinner-table and in the sitting rooms) 'the sunshine she has dispensed here during her residence amongst us'—a cheque for a hundred pounds. 'If you think you can persuade her to accept more,' he added, seeing the housekeeper hesitate.



'you will do me a great favour, Miss Burt, in saying so. This trumpery sum in no way expresses the very high regard and esteem in which I hold Miss Josceline, or my desire to be of service to her.'

Miss Burt was obliged to say that from what she knew of Ella she feared that it would be impossible to get her to accept such a gift, whereupon His Highness, without the least show of resentment, bade her keep it in reserve for her, and to present it, if occasion should arise, as if from herself. 'You will give her my best and most cordial wishes for her future happiness; but as for myself,' and here he uttered a sigh, which to the other's ear spoke less of physical than of mental pain, 'I am feeling far from well, and I think it possible that I may be unable to make my adieux to Miss Josceline in person.'

From which Miss Burt rightly understood that there were to be no 'good-byes' on the morning between His Highness and her niece—a piece of information which afforded Ella unspeakable relief.

Curiously enough, Mr. Heyton also took it into his head to take another early walk in the park that morning, and to prolong it so unfortunately that he was too late to witness the departure of 'the excellent Miss Josceline,' as he afterwards termed her, greatly to Miss Burt's indignation.

Ella's only ordeal was therefore the parting with her aunt, which, indeed, was quite sufficient to try her to the uttermost.

'You will not forget me, darling. God bless you!' sobbed the little woman.

'If I do, may God forget me!' cried Ella earnestly. 'We shall meet again, dear Aunt Hester. I feel it; I am certain of it.'

'I trust we may, and under happier circumstances,' answered the other, deeply moved. 'Oh! my dear, you cannot go on like this—I mean being all alone in the world, you know. Heaven will contrive it so that my pretty one shall find not only a nest of her very own to shelter her, but a mate to love her. Yes, yes; I know all about it, darling—and that was why I felt his poor Highness had no chance—though you never told me a word. There, don't let me think I have vexed you with my last words. Kiss me, darling; kiss me. Again God bless you, and keep you, and comfort you, and may your sainted mother have cause to rejoice in you, and find heaven the happier for it, as I know she will.'

The genuineness of Aunt Hester's loving words made more than amends for their simplicity. Ella felt her very heartstrings drawn to her as she clasped her in that last embrace, and started away upon her lonely life-journey.

## CHAPTER LI.

## FORACRE FARM.

UPON the top of a lofty hill in the beautiful Devonshire country, and on the road where the London and Exeter coaches were once wont to run, but which is now almost a silent highway, stands a solitary inn, the *Royal Welcome*. It has no departed glories to bewail, for though a king, as legend tells, did really take his royal rest there nigh a century ago, it was because his carriage came to grief in that lonely spot, and not from choice, nor was the incident ever made a precedent by future monarchs. The mail coaches themselves had only stopped at the *Welcome* to change horses there; and though it had afforded good opportunity for the occupant of the box-seat to prescribe a glass of 'hot with' or 'cold without' to the driver, that had been the extent of its accommodation. But in late years the development of the national passion for the picturesque had now and then brought tourists that way in summer time, and the landlord had made additions to his premises in the shape of a parlour and a couple of bedrooms to meet their requirements. As for iced claret cup, or even the claret, those modern necessities of life were not to be found there; but the inn and all about it was clean, and if you understood how to eat poached eggs with a steel fork, and could sleep on a mattress apparently stuffed with mangel wurzel, you got on very well at the *Royal Welcome*.

'The two young gentlemen,' as the landlady called them, though they were very much grown up, at present in occupation of these new premises, got on very well there, and, thanks to the wholesome air of the place, ate like cormorants and slept like tops. Otherwise they did not take so much exercise as was usual with tourists, half a dozen of whom, with knapsacks on their backs and perspiration on their brows, would pass the door daily, not without looking in for a glass of 'shandigaff,' a decoction on which the *Welcome* prided itself, as though it had been the original and secret recipe of Senior Wrangler sauce, or Metternich pudding. Some of these callers came up the hill on bicycles, with tedious toil, like flies escaping from a saucer of milk, and the contrast between the rate of their arrival and that of their departure, when, after the 'shandigaff,' they shot down the hill, was very striking. Besides these, there were four-wheeled waggons whose approach in the still night, or the early morning, could be heard like distant thunder from afar, and still more frequently huge caravans on their way to some country fair, full of mangey wild beasts whose

roars as they smelt the 'shandigaff' (supplied to their owners) were a magnificent advertisement thrown away. Houses on wheels, too, in the occupation of Cheap Jacks and their wives and families, were pretty numerous, and to the young gentlemen in the parlour who took so little exercise, the spectacle of all this nomad life was welcome and interesting in a high degree.

The fact was, one of them was a painter and a smoker, and the other a smoker only, if we except certain jottings down in a large note-book, which he made on their common expeditions, and which he confidently believed to be 'ideas.' Their habit was to go out into some beautiful spot with a luncheon basket, and work in their different ways in the open air; and though they never put themselves to inconvenience by physical exertion, or tried their tempers with fatigue, they worked hard.

'You seem to be getting on with your new story, my dear fellow,' said the elder to the younger as they sat at breakfast together one morning. 'I could hardly get a word out of you last evening.'

'Yes; the story grows longer and longer,' returned the other with a sigh. 'I can't say it strikes me as having much merit; but it is undoubtedly more valuable than it was, because you see one is paid by the page.'

'If you are not the greatest, you are certainly the most modest of authors,' returned the other, smiling, and in a tone of marked encouragement. 'I never saw a gentleman connected with literature whose head was less liable to be turned by conceit.'

'And that's not a good sign, mind you, Felspar,' returned the other with a certain vehement bitterness. 'If a man doesn't believe in himself, it is hardly likely he will get others to believe in him.'

'But others do believe in you, my dear fellow. I don't know what you can wish for more than those critiques on your last poems.'

'Well, I wish I hadn't known the good folks who wrote them, or rather that they hadn't known *me*. The question is, How is the book likely to sell? All the rest is leather and prunella.'

'Nay, surely, that is not so. There is a literary success, my dear Vernon, and there is a commercial success.'

Vernon shook his head. 'I do not deceive myself, my dear Felspar. If it is true that it is better to be in the infernal regions than in a fool's paradise, I am so far to be congratulated.'

Felspar rose from the table and placed his hand on his friend's shoulder.

'This bitterness, my dear fellow, is unworthy of you.'

'I know it, Felspar. It is also a very poor return for all your efforts at encouragement.' Without looking up, the speaker reached his hand up to that of his friend and pressed it. 'Forgive me, old fellow; you know I take no mercenary view of my

calling. I love my work as you love yours. I care as little for money for its own sake, but—well—my hope is not dead, but it grows faint; let us talk of something else. Do not the Wallaces live somewhere hereabouts?’

‘Close by, within a mile or so.’

‘You knew that, and never told me! I can well guess why. How thoughtful you are for me! To meet them would indeed be to awaken the old memories, and would only make forgetting—when the time comes for it—more difficult. How fond the dear old lady was of her, Felspar!’

‘Mrs. Wallace? Yes; but who could help being fond of her? That is, I mean’ (and here the artist might himself have supplied a very pretty ‘bit of colour’ for one of his own landscapes) ‘any one who had the same experience of Miss Josceline, as little Davey’s nurse and comforter, which Mrs. Wallace had, must needs have discovered her merits.’

Then, the morning being fine, the two young men sallied forth as usual.

Felspar had resolved that day on taking a sketch from Gallows Hill, a neighbouring eminence, so called from a gibbet that had been erected there, but which was now replaced by a stone cross. Near a century ago, a pedlar had been murdered here by three scoundrels, who had expiated their offence, as the custom was, by being hung in chains in the very place where the crime had been committed. The purple of the heather now alone reminded you of their deed of blood. The scene was of the most exquisite beauty; hill after hill, and distance after distance, met the eye on all sides, like wave on wave. The air was full of a thousand summer scents, but, save for the hum of hidden bees, not a sound was to be heard.

The winged insects, swift and free,  
Like golden boats on a sunny sea  
Laden with light and odour that pass  
Athwart the gleam of the living grass,

were the only creatures visible that had life in them; yet the whole landscape seemed, in a sense, to teem with it, and to enter its protest against extinction.

On a small hillock on their way, however, stood a tombstone, ‘Erected by the Mayor of —, in 1790, to commemorate the murder of an unknown sailor upon the heath and the punishment that overtook his assassins. Traveller, look on the other side of this tombstone,’ on which was written (as a hint for his moral guidance) ‘Thou shalt do no murder.’ A few steps farther on was the memorial cross, with comforting texts from Scripture engraved on the four sides of its base.

‘This cross, *vice* the gibbet, and its inscriptions,’ observed Felspar, ‘is curiously typical of the revolution in thought and manner amongst us, and in strange contrast to yonder tombstone.’

'Then you think these texts are addressed to the murderers, do you?' inquired Vernon.

There was something so comical in the suggestion, or perhaps in the tone in which it was put, that Felspar burst out laughing. Perhaps it was an ill-timed, or rather ill-placed pleasantry, but at all events the next moment he regretted it.

'Good heavens!' he whispered, 'I have startled a fawn.'

And, indeed, from a hollow which had hitherto concealed her from their view there had started up a young lady. She had a pencil and sketch-book in her hand, and had evidently been disturbed in her occupation by Felspar's unexpected merriment.

'Good heavens!' ejaculated Vernon in a muffled voice, which nevertheless was full of emotion, 'it is Miss Josceline.'

Quickly as he had identified her, the recognition on her part had been simultaneous. It was for the young men, of course, to advance towards her—as they did at once—and not she towards them, which was fortunate, for for the moment her limbs refused their office; she stood spellbound gazing on him of whom she had thought so often, but had never expected to see again, and least of all on Gallows Hill.

Felspar was the first to speak. 'My dear Miss Josceline, how on earth came you here?'

'Nay, it is I who should ask you both that question. You are mere visitors, I suppose, whereas I am a resident. I am staying with dear Mrs. Wallace. That is her husband's farm down yonder.'

She pointed in the direction in question, but neither of them had eyes but for herself.

'This is a most unexpected pleasure,' said Vernon softly, a remark in itself as little significant as it was original, yet somehow she seemed to understand that it meant a good deal. That is one of the advantages which lovers possess. To ordinary mortals their talk appears bald and commonplace enough, but to the ear to which it is addressed it clothes itself with meaning.

'But how is it you have left Barton Castle?' inquired Felspar: 'did His Highness threaten to make you a countess in your own right, and so offend your radical principles, or did the Secretary Bird become intolerable?'

'It was neither of those reasons. I suppose I got tired of my gilded cage; with dear Mrs. Wallace I am free as air. How delighted she will be to see you both at Foracre Farm!'

Felspar glanced at Vernon; should he frame some excuse for him about having to return to town that very day, or let matters take their course?

'I should like it of all things,' exclaimed Vernon earnestly; then remembering his late prudent resolutions, he added, 'I don't think it would do for us, Felspar, to be so near and not to look in, eh?'

'Of course you'll look in, Mr. Felspar,' said Ella (it was



curious how she preferred to address him rather than his companion). 'I should never dare to tell her I had met you here and not brought you home. That sudden laugh of yours, when I thought I was quite alone with the humble bees, has so startled me that I am sure I cannot do a stroke of work this morning, and it is only fair that you should suffer for it by being made as idle as myself.'

She was packing up her drawing materials as she spoke, and there was no alternative for Felspar but to do the like with his more extensive preparations.

As for Vernon, now he had once consented to be led to Capua he appeared to give himself up to pleasure unreservedly. The colour had mounted high into his cheeks, and a light was in his eye that had not been there for many a day.

So the boy who is going to school to-morrow will at least enjoy, as he promises himself, his last day of the holidays at home, or the soldier ordered beyond the seas his last day in old England, as though either could shut out the morrow from his mind, or prevent the shadow of the coming farewell projecting itself upon the white present.

Foracre Farm was a picturesque and ancient edifice of considerable size, which, but for its ricks and barns, might have been termed an Elizabethan mansion. The Wallaces themselves, if their income had been 9,000*l.* instead of 900*l.* a year (for it is curious to remark how large a factor in our worship of ancestry is the possession of hard cash), would have been a county family of the most venerable description. As it was, they were yeomen, as they had been from the time 'King Harry broke into the spence and turned the monks adrift.' Everything about the place was handsome and substantial, but with few signs of luxury. The house, which was built of stone, had a large frontage aglow with climbing roses, and a small courtyard, also of stone, but with two large beds (not parterres) full of the same glorious flowers. Through the open doors and the flagged stone passage between them, could be caught a glimpse of the old garden at the back, from which came the sweet breath of welcome from the wallflowers and mignonette. On either side were the parlours (for dining-room and drawing-room Mr. Wallace would never have them called), thick-walled and cool, with their stone-set windows studded with little diamond panes, whereof if a pane was broken no great harm was done—which was fortunate, since there was no glazier within ten miles of them. The moo of the oxen, the bark of the sheep-dog, and the click of the milking pail, were the only sounds to be heard about this sequestered valley farm, but within, there had of late been an importation into the larger of the two sitting-rooms of what Mr. Wallace modestly termed 'a box of music'—which was in fact an excellent cottage piano. The old spinet on which poor Gerty (Mrs. Wallace's dead niece) had been wont to play had been relegated to an upper chamber a few days after Ella's arrival.

It was impossible for her to say 'that piano has been got for me,' because it would have offended her host and hostess; but she knew it of course as well as though they had told her so in so many words. In other respects her welcome had been as demonstrative as their kind hearts could make it; and there had been no apologies for the absence of such things as from the nature of the case were lacking. Instead of the Persian carpets of Barton Castle there were oaken floors; and in place of her boudoir there was a huge sparsely furnished room upstairs looking northwards, which by some mysterious instinct her hostess had divined was suitable for painting purposes. Her bedroom, though no bower, was a model of neatness and comfort; with an oak wardrobe so bright and shining that it rivalled the mirror; cupboards large enough for a queen's wardrobe; and drawers with metal tags, which, when pulled out, perfumed the air with lavender.

To the questions put to her by the two young men as to her host and hostess Ella had but one answer: 'They are simply the kindest couple in the world. The only fault I have to find with my treatment at Foracre Farm is that it fills me with a constant sense of unworthiness.'

One thing more she added when they would have combated this latter view of the case:—

'What I am always saying to myself next to "I don't deserve it," is "How different things might have been with me!" You must not think I am so foolish, as well as ungrateful, as to forget that.'

To this neither answered a word, but looked very grave. They knew of course how true it was, and it distressed them to think to what straits this delicate and fragile creature, whom they both loved so tenderly, might have been exposed in the sea of life, and also how very far she was from a haven of safety yet.

To say that Mrs. Wallace was glad to see her two visitors, was very feebly to express the nature of her welcome. For the first moment she could do nothing but shake their hands and scream to her husband, who was somewhere among his ricks, 'William, William, come quick, they are come at last.' For she had extorted a solemn promise from both, before she left Wallington, that they would come to Devonshire, and had no idea that they had any other purpose in so doing than to be her guests.

When she understood that they were staying at the *Royal Welcome*, her indignation was considerable; but William the Silent said nothing, but presently, leaving the room, despatched a light cart for their luggage, which they found, to their extreme astonishment, in the rooms to which they were shown to wash their hands before the midday meal.

There was nothing for it but to laugh and cordially accept the situation.

'The whole thing is a perfect idyll,' exclaimed Felspar with serene content.

‘Just so,’ said the yeoman, who was present when this remark was made. ‘You can be as idle as you like here, and you’ll find it will do you a power of good.’

The golden days that followed would be hard to tell of ; it is, alas ! the iron ones only of which the record is so easy.

‘Of its kind,’ said Felspar to his friend as they sat together in the latter’s room that night over a farewell pipe—a luxury their hostess had not only permitted but enjoined upon them—in a great bay window which opened on the quiet fields—‘of its kind this place is certainly a paradise.’

‘Yes,’ sighed the other, ‘but to me of the fool’s sort, from which, as I told you, I flattered myself I was secure.’

‘Gather your roses while you may, my dear fellow,’ returned Felspar with a cheerfulness that was perhaps a little forced. And not another word of despondency was dropped by Vernon throughout their stay in the happy valley. He neither sought nor avoided Ella’s society, and imagined that his attitude and behaviour towards her were simply those of an old friend. Whether she thought so too was difficult for a man to judge, but it may be conjectured from the following conversation between his host and hostess that the latter lady had formed a strong conviction upon the subject.

‘William, my dear,’ she said, when she and her husband were alone together after bidding their two guests ‘good night’ for the last time (for they had arranged to leave on the next morning), ‘you mark my words. Ella is bespoken.’

‘What do you mean ? She ain’t a-going away too, is she ?’ returned the yeoman in unmistakable alarm, for Ella was almost as great a favourite with him as with his wife.

‘Not to-morrow, of course ; but it won’t be long first. Can’t you see that one of those young men is in love with her, and that she returns it ?’

William shook his head. ‘Of course they are both in love with her—who, being a bachelor, could help it ? But there’s safety in numbers.’

‘How blind you poor men are !’ said his wife compassionately. ‘Is it possible you don’t see which of them it is ?’

‘Well, I think I do,’ said William, ‘now you mention it. He’s the most with her, to be sure, and talks with her so gravely, and smiles—I noticed that particularly—in such a protecting way like. Yes, it’s the painter, of course.’

‘You’re a dear silly old goose,’ returned his spouse.

## CHAPTER LII.

## A SHADOW IN THE SUNSHINE.

ALTHOUGH Mrs. Wallace was so well convinced how matters stood between Mr. Vernon and her young friend, Ella herself was by no means so sure, at all events so far as the gentleman was concerned. As for herself she was conscious of experiencing certain feelings in Vernon's presence; a desire to please, with a nervous apprehension of disclosing it; a flutter of the heart at his first footfall, whisper, touch; and a vague yearning to be with him; all which she certainly had a strong suspicion was *love*. The extraordinary interest she took in his fortunes, the admiration she felt for the poems and stories which had been published in his name, could hardly be accounted for on any other hypothesis. She liked Mr. Felspar very much indeed, and would have been more demonstrative of it if a certain gentle reticence on his part had not repelled her; she thought his landscapes admirable, and was delighted to know he was growing in public estimation; but her attachment to him was somehow of a different kind. She took a certain pride in Vernon's achievements, which she did not in Felspar's, as though they had been achievements of her own. He was even more silent and modest about his pursuits than was his friend; yet somehow she had elicited from him that he found literature uphill work, and that, though he enjoyed what others might have reasonably considered the drudgery of it, he did not look for any substantial reward from it, nor even any considerable reputation. She had rallied him upon this point, and instanced Mr. Fortescue's poems as a proof of what a very young man (as his publishers in answer to her inquiries had informed her he was) could accomplish. 'They have been reviewed, I notice, very favourably,' she said; and yet, do you know, Mr. Vernon, though I agree with the reviewers, I do not think they are any better than your own "Italian Organ Boy." You can't say it was because I illustrated it,' she added, smiling, 'because you know I illustrated Mr. Fortescue's also.'

'I don't think Mr. Fortescue would be pleased with your comparison, Miss Ella; though, indeed, his book seems to me to owe a great deal to your pencil.'

'You are not like Mr. Felspar, Mr. Vernon,' she replied, reprovingly, 'who never stoops to flatter.'

Upon this, Vernon, who seemed tickled by this observation, cried out to his friend, who was sketching some distance off, 'What do you think of Fortescue's poems, Felspar?'

'Pretty good for his age,' was the reply.

'You mean his epoch, I suppose. Are they as good as Tennyson's?'

'I don't mean his epoch, sir, I mean his years. He is only trying his wings, and whether he can fly or not is still to be seen.'

'And what do you think of the illustrations?' halloed Vernon.

'For shame, Mr. Vernon!' cried Ella. 'If I am blushing, it is for you and not for myself. How dare you put such a question in my presence?'

'The pictures are much too good for the letterpress,' bawled Felspar.

'There, you see,' said Vernon, triumphantly, 'and yet you affirmed that Felspar never flatters.'

'I withdraw my good opinion of him,' answered Ella. 'But what he just said, to judge by its tone, was said rather to tease you than to please me.'

'How should it tease me?' inquired Vernon quickly.

'Well, perhaps you are a friend of Mr. Fortescue's. I noticed, when we were looking at the book together, that you seemed to take a sort of personal interest in it.'

A roar of laughter here broke from the artist.

'What is he laughing at?' said Ella.

'Some absurd mistake he has made in his picture, I suppose,' replied Vernon, taking care this time to drop his voice; 'he often does it.'

The 'Ballads from English History,' a copy of which Ella had just received 'With the Publishers' compliments,' was a very favourite volume with her, we may be sure. The illustrations, if not the poems, were much admired by her host and hostess, and, indeed, the latter was as proud of them as though she had drawn them herself; but naturally—*noblesse oblige*, as Felspar hinted—Ella spoke most of the poems. It astonished her to learn from Vernon that the lion's share in the way of recompense (small as hers had been) had probably fallen to herself, and not to the author; that poems, unless by some well-known bard, were a drug in the market, &c. &c.

'Then why do young authors write poems—I mean, if there is a necessity for them to live by their pens? And yet that is a foolish question,' she added hastily. 'I suppose, as the poet tells us—

They do but sing because they must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing'

'I am afraid not always,' answered Vernon, with a grave smile. 'They like to try their strength of wing even when they have no expectation of taking a high flight. Though one knows it is folly—madness,' he added bitterly, 'one cannot help yearning after the unattainable.'

She looked up at him in surprise at his vehemence; but his



face was averted from her, and he presently made some excuse for joining the rest of the party.

This sort of thing had happened more than once. In the middle of an interesting conversation, or when they had grown more familiar than common over some engrossing topic, he had suddenly seemed as it were to recollect himself, and almost to regret that he had been so sympathetic. This puzzled Ella, of course, but it did not pique her.

On the other hand, when, after the young men's departure, letters presently came for Mrs. Wallace from both of them expressing the pleasure they had derived from their late visit, there was a certain reticence observable in Vernon's references to Ella which secretly distressed her. She was quite certain that she had not given him the least cause of offence, yet his remembrances to her were stiff and formal. Mrs. Wallace herself observed it, and inquired (of Space and Nature generally) what on earth could have come to the young men nowadays? In her time things had not been so, that was all she could say; and she had no patience with them.

It could not be said that Ella was pining from unrequited affection; but her hostess clearly perceived, as she flattered herself, 'how the land lay,' and was exceedingly indignant at the supposed neglect of her favourite.

There are thousands of young girls who have to bear the same burden, and though that reflection had little comfort in it to one of her kindly nature, the consciousness of her good fortune in other respects no doubt made Ella resigned to her lonely lot. The simple country life was very acceptable to her; the 'brushing ankle-deep in flowers,' and hearing,—

Behind the woodbine veil,  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours,

no doubt soothed much of her unrest. And then she had the inestimable blessing of occupation to prevent her mind from feeding on its own thoughts, like some starving Dr. Tanner on his muscles.

She was improving rapidly in her handicraft. Her modesty never permitted her to speak of her 'art' in that intolerable way with which we have all become so unhappily familiar. An expression dropped now and then from simple Mrs. Wallace's lips, 'Well, I do call that drawing downright beautiful, Ella,' &c., was all the eulogy she ever received in place of that flattery of a clique which she might have earned under circumstances more favourable to the development of the 'caw me, caw thee' system; but she had a belief she was 'getting on,' and continued commissions from her publishers confirmed it.

Thus she continued—by no means 'withering on the virgin thorn,' yet with cheeks somewhat paler and thinner 'than should be for one so young'—for many months; a whole year, indeed,

had elapsed since that visit of her two old young friends, till at last, among the rare tidings that reached her from the world without, came an unexpected blow.

Mr. Felspar wrote on black-edged paper, 'I have very, very sad news for you, dear Miss Ella'—and there she stopped, with her hand upon her heart, gasping for breath and life; that heart (which speaks the whole truth to us) misgave her that something had happened to Vernon. She sat down on the nearest chair—the letter had fortunately been brought to her in her own apartment—and pictured to herself the whole horror of what might have been: 'To her, perpetual widowhood; to him, cut off in his flower, the untimely, remorseless, and incongruous grave. Then, with a hasty prayer that it might not be so, read on: 'Our dear little friend, who loved you so, Davey Aird, is dead. He had been ailing for a long time, but his end, it seems, was comparatively sudden. His poor father is well-nigh distracted, as you will easily believe, and has telegraphed for me to come to him. I will write more in a day or two.'

For the moment Ella's tender heart misgave her that she might have done more for Davey. If she had but heard of his illness, as she might have done if she had kept up communication with his father, she could have volunteered to nurse him, as she had done before. He had said that there was no nurse like his own dear Nelly, and though she could not have saved him she might have soothed his last hours. But on reflection she felt herself acquitted on this point; it would have been impossible, under the circumstances, to have offered her services. But her regret for the catastrophe, and her pity for the forlorn old man, were overwhelming, and of course she expressed them to Mr. Felspar.

There were many tears shed at Foracre Farm, both by herself and her hostess, over the memory of their former little patient. 'If we are only good enough,' said Mrs. Wallace, with that trustful simplicity which is worth whole libraries of theology, 'we shall see little Davey again, my dear. There is no call,' and here her tears redoubled, 'to weep for such an angel.'

The excellent philosophers and prosperous gentlemen who maintain the theory of self-interest, and practise what they preach so admirably by living exclusively for themselves, would have been quite astonished by the emotions thus excited by so insignificant a cause. 'The old man 'ull feel it,' was all Mr. Wallace said; but the good farmer's thoughts for a day or two, as he walked among his ricks, or gazed with critical eye upon his bees, were not, it may be presumed, wholly occupied with them. For when the week was over, and little Davey, as they heard, had been buried, he said to his wife, 'I've been thinking the old man 'ud like to run down here and bide awhile with you and Miss Ella who loved the lad.'

To this, Mrs. Wallace, who knew nothing of the reason that had made Ella a stranger to Mr. Aird since the old Wallington

days, and who thought his coming would be 'a surprise' for her, eagerly assented; and the invitation was given through Mr. Felspar.

The artist's reply, dated from a London hotel, turned their sorrow upon their proposed guest's account into apprehension.

'It is impossible, my dear Mrs. Wallace,' he wrote, 'that Mr. Aird should take advantage, at present at all events, of your proffered hospitality. He is in a state of mind which gives me great uneasiness. I must not say that his brain is affected, for upon all subjects save one he is as sane as ever he was. But there are times——' here there were signs of an erasure over which was written 'when I almost fear to leave him to himself and Vernon. I go down with him to-morrow, at his urgent request, to Wallington Bay; and I dread the effect which the remembrance of the once happy days we spent there together with little Davey may have upon him. I hear, too, there are some of our old party at the *Ultramarine*, which will help still more to recall such memories. The very light of the old man's life seems to have gone out, and, as I have hinted, I sometimes tremble for that of his reason. His only comfort seems to be in the company of Vernon and myself, of whom—and more especially of Miss Josceline—the poor boy used to speak in his last illness. I know it will occur to her that perhaps her presence may be of service.' Here Ella, to whom Mrs. Wallace was reading the letter aloud, bowed her head in grave assent.

'But, on the whole,' it continued, 'I do not, at all events just now, advise it. Indeed, I think it would be'—here there was another erasure—'unadvisable. I will write again when we are settled at Wallington.' Then there was a postscript. 'I write in the haste of a sudden departure, and have only time to add that Mr. Aird's physical health is no worse than it used to be, so far as I can see; though at times I think he suffers pain, or would do so if pain could affect him.'

'That postscript is worse than all,' observed Ella gravely.

'That is just what I think,' agreed her hostess. 'Mr. Felspar wishes to spare us, or he could tell us more.'

'No doubt he could.'

'Still, "upon all subjects save one," he writes, "Mr. Aird is quite himself."'

'I don't like those erasures,' mused Ella; 'they seem to me to have a serious significance.'

They were very deftly done, as all the artist's handiwork was, and no doubt he thought they would escape recognition, yet, had he had time to spare, he would doubtless have given more care to his letter or have rewritten it.

'They are certainly very suspicious,' assented Mrs. Wallace; 'though, unless you had pointed them out to me, I should never have observed them. I am so stupid.'

Then there was a long silence.

‘First, my dear father,’ murmured Ella sadly, ‘then this little darling, and now poor Mr. Aird! How little we thought of such things in those first happy days at Wallington!’

‘And how little we think now,’ returned Mrs. Wallace, cheerfully, ‘of the happy days that may be still in store for us; for you, my dear, who are young, especially.’

Ella smiled and kissed her; but her heart was very heavy.

‘Dear little Davey!’ she sighed again; ‘poor Mr. Aird!’

## CHAPTER LIII.

### BAD NEWS.

A FEW days afterwards, as they were sitting at breakfast, Mr. Wallace, who received as few written communications perhaps as any grown person within the range of the British postal delivery, exclaimed suddenly, on opening the letter bag, ‘Why, who’s this writing to me?’

‘Not a lady, I hope,’ said Ella slyly; ‘though that’s Mrs. Wallace’s affair and not mine.’

‘It’s got “Private” on it,’ cried the yeoman with a laugh, as though privacy in connection with epistolary correspondence was a joke indeed.

‘Oh, come, I must see to that!’ exclaimed his wife. Give it to me, William;’ and she made a feint of gaining possession of it.

‘No, you don’t!’ cried her husband, who in the meantime had just glanced at the contents. ‘Perhaps I’ll tell you something about it after breakfast—— No; I won’t take a rasher this morning, thank you; nor yet any pigeon pie. I’m rather off my feed.’

‘Lor, William, what is the matter?’ exclaimed Mrs. Wallace, to whom this statement was indeed a portent of evil.

‘I am afraid there is bad news from Wallington,’ murmured Ella, with a white face.

‘Well, that is just it, Miss Ella,’ said the farmer in embarrassed tones; ‘only I was particularly not to tell you all of a sudden like. That’s why they wrote to me instead of the Missis. I was to “break it” to you, Mr. Felspar says; but since you’ve guessed it——’ and Mr. Wallace scratched his head, and looked oppressed with the burden of an honour to which he was not born. Nobody had ever entrusted him with a secret before in all his life.

‘Pray tell me all,’ cried Ella imploringly; ‘I can bear anything except suspense.’

‘He says I am to break it—I suppose he means in little bits,’ said Mr. Wallace doubtfully.

But by this time his wife had possessed herself of the communication, which she at once proceeded to read aloud.



‘ Wallington Bay.

‘ My dear Wallace,—I write these lines under cover to you, that you may communicate the sad news they convey to your wife in private, and especially that she and you may break them cautiously to Miss Josceline. A dreadful catastrophe has happened here. In my last letter I expressed my fears that Mr. Aird’s coming to this place might be fraught with some danger; and I deeply regret to say that they have been realised. As soon as Dr. Cooper saw him he expressed to me the gravest anxiety about his state of mind. There was only one thing, as I told you, which betrayed this—when the least allusion was made to little Davey he was not himself. But after he came down here he could talk of nothing else. We thought it better he should be at Clover Cottage with ourselves and not at the hotel, which, as it turns out, was perhaps so far fortunate. Yesterday morning, when, as we thought, he was in his room, the doctor called and had a talk with us about him.

“ It is my duty to tell you,” he said in conclusion, “ that Mr. Aird must never be left alone—that one of you two must be always with him. But of course such a state of things cannot last for ever.”

‘ At this moment I walked Mr. Aird.

“ Of course it can’t,” he said gravely. “ They have had trouble enough about me—these two—already.”

‘ It seems he had been listening at the door—a proceeding, I need not say, utterly foreign to his nature. Dr. Cooper has since told me that it was to him a convincing proof of his insanity—an example of the madman’s cunning.’

‘ Poor soul, think of that ! ’ ejaculated Mrs. Wallace.

‘ Well, we explained matters as well as we could to him ; assured him that our time was his for the next month or two at all events ; that he gave us no trouble whatever, &c., &c., and he seemed satisfied.

‘ I must tell you that since your time—the old happy times, alas ! at Wallington—the steamer between Meresley and Northport has called here once a week, touching at the Bay the same day, on its return from Northport. Yesterday was, with us, very tempestuous for the time of year—not a wet day, but very windy—the sea mountains high, and we hardly expected that the steamer could put in. It did so, however, and nothing I could say would dissuade Mr. Aird from going on it; he said he thought the “ blow ” from Northport and back would do him good.

“ Quite right,” said Vernon in his quiet way ; “ I think it will do me good too.”

“ Pooh, pooh ! ” said Mr. Aird ; “ you are well enough as it is ; why should *you* go ? ”

“ The steamer is a public conveyance,” returned Vernon, laughing, “ and it is a free country.”

‘ You know how difficult it is to be angry with Vernon ; and,



though Mr. Aird evidently resented his determination, he said nothing more. They two were the only passengers, and very astonished the captain was to see them come aboard. As if to mark his sense of annoyance, Mr. Aird sat apart from Vernon the whole of the way to Northport, where they touched but did not stop. On the way back the sea abated a little; but even then it was not possible to move about without holding on to something. When they were nearing home, Vernon, who never took his eyes off Mr. Aird, saw him suddenly climb upon the paddle-box, and leap into the sea. "Man overboard!" he shouted to the captain on the bridge, and the next moment jumped in after him. He did not even wait to kick his shoes off.

'Oh, that dear Mr. Vernon!' sobbed Mrs. Wallace.

'A good fellow,' observed the farmer hoarsely; 'a real good fellow.'

Ella said nothing, only moved her lips. Her face was as white as the breakfast-cloth—and the linen at Foracre Farm was like the driven snow.

'The captain says that Mr. Aird had literally no time to sink; that Vernon was down on him like a sea bird on a fish; but by the time the steamer could be stopped and a boat lowered, it was well-nigh all over with both of them. It must have been so if Mr. Aird had clutched him; but, though the old man could not swim, he made no attempt to do this, whether from a noble unselfishness, or the absence of even the instinctive love of life, can never be known.'

'He's dead then!' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace, aghast with horror.

'Read on,' said Ella earnestly.

'Even in such a sea, Vernon, being so strong a swimmer, would have had no difficulty in bearing the other up; but the fact is, though there is no need to talk of it, poor Mr. Aird, with that "madman's cunning" of which the doctor spoke, had filled his pockets full of pebbles, which of course he took with him from Wallington. Conceive the poor man's thoughts upon that voyage and back again; seeking for the opportunity when the captain's back was turned, or perhaps making up his mind—or what remained of it, poor soul!—for the fatal plunge. What, I think, testifies to Vernon's presence of mind, as convincingly as his heroic act itself (for it was nothing less), was that while in the boat, and before they were taken on board, he contrived to remove the pebbles, so that the whole affair might wear the appearance of an accident. Mr. Aird appeared quite lifeless; but before the steamer reached Wallington he had revived a little, and was carried here in a very prostrate condition, but as I have good reason to believe, quite conscious. He died, however, "from the shock and exhaustion," says Dr. Cooper, within the hour. When we have laid him in his grave, in that churchyard at Barton which we all know so well, either Vernon or myself will run down to Foracre Farm.

It was his own wish that we should do so, for the purpose, for one thing, of conveying to Miss Josceline a last memento of him, or rather of one that he loved dearer than himself—sweet little Davey. You will keep what I have written concerning the nature of his end secret among yourselves; it was his desire—a very strange one you will say—that you should know it; and, though with great reluctance, I have therefore described things exactly as they happened. Of course he was not responsible for the act in any way. His mind had broken down under its weight of trouble. Just at first it wandered a little, and he said something about Vernon—though with a very sweet smile—that we could make nothing of; but before his end came he was quite himself, which Dr. Cooper says is not unusual in such cases. “I die happy,” were his last words, spoken with inexpressible tenderness; “think of me to-night with my own Davey.”

‘I am afraid,’ concluded Felspar, ‘I shall have been the involuntary cause of throwing a deep shadow (where there is wont to be such sunshine) in your happy home. I add, therefore, that among other things our poor friend whispered to us on his death-bed, was this: “Let none who love me grieve for me; let not my death, which is happiness to me, be the cause of sorrow to any human being.” There were other things he said of which Vernon or myself, whichever comes, will inform you; just at present I have a good deal to do, as you may imagine when I tell you Mr. Aird has made me his sole executor, so you must excuse my writing at greater length. With our kindest regards to your wife and to Miss Ella,

‘I am, your faithful friend,

‘MICHAEL FELSPAR.’

In spite of poor Mr. Aird’s last injunctions, his death, or rather, it would be more correct to say, the manner of his end was the cause of much sorrow at Foracre Farm. That death had been a happy release to the weary and forlorn old man himself, there could be no doubt; and, after the first shock of the news had worn away, this was the view the little party at the farm took of it. Without a friend (save those we wot of) or a relative in the world, and with every reminiscence a pang, how could they have wished him to live on! In a few days they began to speak of the matter calmly, and (so closely does humour tread on the heels of tragedy) on one occasion it was even the cause of a smile.

‘It is very odd, William,’ observed Mrs. Wallace—who, with all her tenderness of heart, often took the most matter-of-fact view of affairs, and, again, sometimes said things which, if she had turned them over in her mind first, she would certainly have left unsaid—‘It is very odd how that unfortunate remark of mine at the *table-d’hôte* at Wallington has come true; there’s not only little Davey dead, you see, but his poor father.’

‘Not to mention the Hon. Emilius Josceline,’ remarked her husband drily.

'Lor bless me ! If I hadn't clean forgotten him !' exclaimed Mrs. Wallace ; 'how thankful I am, William, Ella was not here. How stupid and unfeeling I am !'

'Well, I don't know as to that, little woman. Mr. Josceline was a very clever gentleman, but I doubt if any eye dropped a tear for him save his daughter's. I don't know that you had any particular call to remember him. How curious it is,' continued the yeoman musingly, 'that with cattle and such like a good breed or a bad makes such a difference ; with human beings it ain't at all so. Here's Miss Ella, for example, all unselfishness and simplicity.'

'Perhaps she got it from her mother,' hazarded Mrs. Wallace. 'She has spoken to me about her once or twice as having been a perfect angel.'

'Perhaps so. She was an angel, however, before her daughter knew her, so could scarcely have had much hand in forming her character ; and even with the cattle something beyond breed is required. The best Alderney wouldn't thrive in Shetland, I'll be bound. No ; I think there is such a thing as sheer natural goodness, though, of course, as in Miss Ella's case, it grows and grows by use. It would be a thousand pities if such a girl should never marry. What a good wife she would make ; and what a mother !'

'No doubt,' said Mrs. Wallace with a sigh, for she, too, would have given much to have had children about her knees. 'Let us hope it will be so.'

'If Mr. Felspar is made sole executor,' remarked her husband significantly, 'it is probable that the old man has left him a good bit of money.'

'I hope so. But you are quite on the wrong tack, William, in supposing that would affect Ella's future. If Mr. Felspar was rolling in wealth she would never have him.'

'Well ; he comes down here next week, it seems, and then we shall see. Now I'll lay my best cow against the white donkey that takes your milk about, that this time next month Ella is engaged to be married.'

'I never made a bet in my life that I know of,' said Mrs. Wallace confidently ; 'but I'll take this one. I shall win that cow.'

'If you do, it shall be "for your separate use and maintenance," as Lawyer Fell used to call it ; but I rather think you will lose your white donkey, and I will ride to market on it instead of Dobbin.'

At this picture—for the farmer weighed something, and the donkey was small—the worthy pair, who were easily tickled, were much moved to mirth.

'By-the-by,' said Mr. Wallace presently, 'why shouldn't Mr. Aird leave Miss Ella something for herself ? He was very fond of her (as was only natural), and think how kind she was to his boy.'

‘I have thought of that, of course, William. But there is something that tells me that won’t be. Ella is very peculiar about money matters; she wouldn’t take Mr. Aird’s thousand pounds, you remember, when she wanted it a deal more than she does now, and I doubt if she would take his money even now.’

‘What! not if it was left to her? Well, I never.’

‘Nor anybody else, William; but still that is my belief. Did it never strike you that perhaps Mr. Josceline had old Mr. Aird in his eye for a son-in-law?’

‘It certainly never did. Why, the poor man was old enough for her grandfather.’

‘Well; he must have married young for that, William; but of course there was a great disparity. However, my conviction is that some such idea as that was put into Ella’s mind by her father, and that that’s why she refused Mr. Aird’s assistance. It set her against him like—that is, in the way of accepting anything from his hands, and it will set her against it now.’

‘Well, certainly, you women do get strange things into your heads, such as we men never do, yet I can’t believe that of Ella.’

‘You must admit, however, she did refuse the money.’

‘Yes, she did; and I think Dr. Cooper (or anybody else) would say it was a much greater proof of madness than listening at doors. Cattle I understand, but not women—women are kittle cattle;’ and the yeoman smiled complacently as a man has a right to do over his own joke, when he makes but one in a twelvemonth.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### MUSHROOM PICKING.

ONE of the few amusements of the Foracre folks—for pastimes were not in their way; time never hung heavy enough on hand to need *them*—was mushroom gathering. In due season they could be gathered by the basketful in the meadows about the farm, and Mrs. Wallace and Ella would often require the services of the white donkey to bring home their spoil. The goodman or the house delighted in these dainties, and sometimes Ella would go forth in the early morning and forage for them for his breakfast.

One morning she was engaged in this occupation a few fields from home, and had been fortunate beyond her expectations; having stooped for her last mushroom, she was returning with much spoil, when she suddenly saw some one getting over a stile in the next field, at the sight of whom she suddenly dropped her basket and turned pale, as though he had been a mad bull. Yet the field was a public one, and a

path ran through it from the little railway station, so that the sight of a stranger could hardly have been so very unexpected. And, moreover, he was not a stranger. He was a young man of very respectable appearance—indeed, he was in deep mourning—who took off his hat to her with marked respect, though with a certain nervousness of manner which fortunately she was not near enough to him to observe. He had a bronzed face on which, in spite of his efforts to make it grave, there was a tender smile.

‘I’m afraid I frightened you, Miss Ella, by my premature appearance,’ he said, as he came up and took her hand; ‘visitors have no right to come at such hours, but the fact is I travelled by the night mail.’

‘I am very glad to see you, Mr. Vernon, very,’ she said, ‘and so, I am sure, will Mr. and Mrs. Wallace be; but we didn’t expect—that is——’

‘You expected Felspar, of course, instead of me,’ he said, ‘which no doubt is a disappointment.’

‘I did not say that, Mr. Vernon, though Mr. Felspar is a great favourite with all of us.’

‘And so he ought to be, for he deserves it. He is, I believe, one of the best of men, as I am sure he is the best of friends. But the fact is his hands are just now too full of affairs—business matters—to admit of his coming down.’

‘Matters connected with poor Mr. Aird, of course. Oh, Mr. Vernon, how that shocked us all!’

‘I was afraid it would, but we thought it better to tell you the whole truth.’ And then they fell to talking about their dead friend.

From what Vernon told her of the matter she soon lost that feeling of horror concerning his end, which the idea of suicide (once so heroic, now so reprobated) always inspires. Upon one point, on which he shipwrecked, Mr. Aird had been undoubtedly insane, and was therefore blameless; on all others he had shown himself to the last the kindly, generous, and (beneath the rugged surface) tender-hearted man that he really was.

‘He loved you, Ella,’ said Vernon, ‘as though he had been your own father.’

Ella trembled, partly because this speech awakened certain memories, partly because her companion in his earnestness and fervour had called her for the first time by her Christian name. He had done so unconsciously no doubt, but the sound of the more familiar title from Vernon’s lips had a strange attraction for her. His voice, indeed, was very sweet and low, and, from the nature of the subject, confidential. They walked together side by side; he had picked up her mushrooms for her, and was carrying her basket in one hand, but the other somehow had sought her own.

‘That he should have been attached to you, Ella,’ he continued, ‘can surprise no one; but his last words also expressed a great regard for a much less worthy object—myself.’



'How could it have been otherwise?—that is, I mean—' said Ella, repenting of the enthusiasm her tone had involuntarily displayed; 'did you not risk your life for him, Mr. Vernon?'

'My name is Walter,' returned the young man very gently; 'would you mind calling me Walter?'

As Ella did not reply to this question, it must be taken for granted that she did not mind.

'As Mr. Aird was so fond of you, and had a regard for me,' Vernon went on, 'it was only natural that he should associate us together in his mind, or perhaps he guessed something—a secret I had assuredly never told him, since I had not dared to tell it even to you.'

They walked on in silence, but very slowly; there was a singing in her ears, yet Ella could hear their feet moving through the fresh grass; the low of the cows in the homestead; the song of a distant thrush.

'It was because he guessed my secret and wished me to tell it to you (for which I had not hitherto had the courage), that he sent me hither as the bearer of his last farewell. He said to me, "Give my dear love to her, Vernon, and if, as I think, you love one another, kiss her for me."'

And here Walter kissed her. That, of course, was a sacred duty. Having performed it, you would think, perhaps, that there was an end of the affair; but that was not the case. He followed up the caress by proxy, by kissing his fair companion upon his own account. And somehow or another, though Ella was by no means resolute in her resistance, those unfortunate mushrooms fell out of the basket during the process.

'I have loved you, darling, from the first instant I set eyes on you,' whispered this impulsive young man. And (though I am too much of a gentleman, I hope, to repeat a lady's exact words, uttered in a moment of confidence), I may say that Ella murmured something that had a similar tendency.

At this particular spot the hedgerow between them and the farm happened to be exceptionally thick, and neither of them for some moments evinced any disposition to proceed where the veil of greenery was thinner. Indeed, they might have stopped there much longer, but for a summons from the garden from the mistress of the house herself.

'El—la! El—la! breakfast, breakfast!' she shouted in her cheerful tones.

They were close by, though she could not see them; and it was really rather embarrassing for them to come out as it were of ambush, and show themselves. However, they had to do it.

'What, Mr. Vernon! Good gracious! Is it really you?'

'I believe so, ma'am,' said the young gentleman modestly, though indeed he was in such a tumult of happiness that he might well have been doubtful of his own identity. 'We have ventured to bring you a little present of mushrooms.'

‘But where *are* the mushrooms?’

In his confusion, the too happy young man had not perceived that his basket was empty. Its late contents lay where the hedge was thickest, yet not more out of sight than out of mind.

‘Oh, never mind the mushrooms!’ exclaimed Mrs. Wallace delightedly; ‘pray walk in, Mr. Vernon; and Ella, do you go upstairs and change your boots immediately, because the grass is so wet.’

Being a woman, she, of course, took in the situation at a glance, and offered this way of escape to the blushing Ella.

Mr. Vernon had a great deal to talk about at breakfast that morning, and it was certainly natural that he should be the chief speaker, but even Mr. Wallace couldn’t help noticing how silent Ella was; on the other hand she was a most excellent listener—so good a one that she might, to some minds, have suggested a parallel to Desdemona hanging on the accents of Othello.

Vernon had brought for her the portrait of little Davey which Mr. Aird had confided to his keeping; and when Ella left the room to put this precious gift away, Mrs. Wallace could not restrain her feminine curiosity to know ‘what poor Mr. Aird had done with all his money.’

‘He has left some of it to Felspar,’ said Vernon, blushing even more than he had done over the empty mushroom basket; ‘but the bulk of it has gone elsewhere.’

This was not very satisfactory; and, what was worse, it was plain that Mr. Vernon did not wish to be put to the question on that point; yet Mrs. Wallace could not restrain herself from saying, ‘Then do you mean to say that, except the picture of little Davey, he has left Ella nothing?’

‘He has left her nothing but the picture.’

‘I am sorry for that,’ said Mrs. Wallace rather drily.

She afterwards observed to her husband, when alone with him, that though Mr. Vernon had looked grave enough when he gave them this information, he had not looked particularly sorry.

‘Perhaps he’s got the money himself,’ suggested the farmer. ‘In that case you can hardly expect him to be in tears about the disposal of it.’

‘How hard you are, William!’ said his wife reprovingly. ‘Though, indeed, even if Mr. Vernon has got it——’

‘Well, what?’

‘Well, I would tell you a secret if I thought you could keep it. It is my firm impression that Mr. Vernon has come in for Mr. Aird’s estate. It was only his poverty that made him hesitate so long about asking Ella to marry him, and now that he feels he can offer her a fitting home, and an establishment——’

‘No,’ interrupted the farmer emphatically; ‘our Miss Ella is not of that sort. She is not one of those fine young ladies who care about an establishment.’

‘I did not say she was, William. Really if you go on like this about Miss Ella, you’ll make some one else jealous.’

'You jealous? No, my little woman; you've too much sense for that.'

Here, to the farmer's great astonishment, his wife began to laugh. 'I was not referring to myself at all, you silly old creature. Where was I when you broke in with "our Miss Ella"? Yes; I was saying that now Mr. Vernon has the means he will marry her; indeed, he has told me almost as much this very morning. Now what do you think of that?'

Mr. Wallace scratched his head in amazement; if he had known that all Vernon had said was, 'We have ventured to bring you a little present of mushrooms,' he would not have felt perhaps the same conviction on the matter as his wife did. As it was, he observed, 'Nay, but that was quick work, lass.'

'I suppose he was making up for lost time,' observed Mrs. Wallace, who was in great spirits. It was a high testimony to her unselfishness that she was so, since the stroke of fortune which would make her favourite such a happy woman, would of necessity take her away from Foracre Farm, where she had won the hearts of both host and hostess, and was as a daughter of their own.

Perhaps the farmer imagined that his wife had forgotten this dark side of the picture, for he observed gravely, 'If things are as you say, little woman, I am afraid you will feel parting with the lass. She has found the same place in your heart that poor Gerty used to hold, I reckon.'

'Yes,' sighed Mrs. Wallace. 'Heaven forbid, however, I should grudge the dear girl to the man she loves. Besides, marriage is not like death; we don't lose her, but only lend her.'

'And by-the-by,' remarked the yeoman slyly, 'you have lost something else, remember, by this love affair. I've won your white donkey.'

'Not a bit of it,' said his wife. 'On the contrary, you have reminded me that I have won your cow.'

'My words were,' replied her husband with a seriousness that it was easy for one of his sedateness to affect, 'I'll lay my best cow against your white donkey that this time next month Miss Ella is engaged to be married.'

'Yes; but you meant to Mr. Felspar.'

'Now, it's a most extraordinary thing,' observed the farmer, 'that whenever a woman makes a bet and loses it she always tries to make out she won it.'

'You know very well I've won it, William.'

'Very well; we'll just refer it to a third person. Here's Mr. Vernon and Ella, who count as one, and indeed look like it—dear me! he had his arm round her waist, though he has just whipped it away—now I'll appeal to them. Mr. Vernon' (raising his voice), 'my wife has bet—'

'Be quiet, William, how dare you!' exclaimed his spouse, putting her hand up to his mouth to stop him.

‘Has bet her white donkey to my best cow——’

‘For shame, William, for shame!’

‘That you and Miss Ella——’ here, what with laughter and the gag his consort had contrived for him, the good-natured yeoman stood in peril of suffocation. ‘Well, if you’ll give in, little woman, I’ll not say another word,’ he sputtered. ‘Otherwise—her bet was, Mr. Vernon——’

‘The donkey is yours, William,’ cried poor Mrs. Wallace *in extremis*; ‘but I think you are very mean.’

I don’t suppose the yeoman took possession of his prize or meant to take it, but never over any bargain at fair or market had he grinned and chuckled as he did over the winning of that white donkey. The circumstances, however, evoked from Ella (who, I fancy, for all her innocent looks, guessed what that bet had been about) a full confession to her friend and hostess, compressed, however (*à la* Liebig) into half a dozen words. ‘I am just the happiest girl in all the world, dear Mrs. Wallace.’

In answer to the latter’s eager inquiries, however, it seemed she had no details to communicate, and yet she had been talking to her Walter all the morning.

‘But am I not right in supposing that Mr. Aird has left Mr. Vernon a fortune, Ella?’

‘I am sure I don’t know,’ she answered. ‘Stay, yes I do; he can’t have done that, for I remember now that Walter said must not mind marrying a very poor man.’

## CHAPTER LV.

### CREEK COTTAGE.

‘THE wishes of the departed are above all things to be respected,’ is a well-known and most respectable dogma. And no one could have shown himself more piously inclined in this way than Walter Vernon. Mr. Aird, it seems, had not confined himself to the expression of a general hope that his demise should not be the cause of sorrow to others, but had urged a speedy union between his two young friends. Arrangements for their marriage, in short, were made almost immediately. The wedding which, upon all accounts, was a very quiet one, of course took place at Foracre Farm; the good yeoman giving the bride away, though, as he frankly told the bridegroom, ‘very unwillingly.’ For Mr. and Mrs. Wallace it was indeed like losing the light of their house for a second time; albeit the bridegroom promised that it should shine again there once every year at the very least. Invitations were issued to Miss Burt and Mr. Felspar; but, strange to say, were accepted by the former only. The painter had suddenly been sent for (he wrote) on important business to Rome, and was unable to be present.

'I am very, very sorry,' said Ella, with tears of vexation in her eyes, as she read his letter. 'He has been such a good friend to me, dear Mrs. Wallace, you cannot think. I should have liked to have told him so with my own lips.'

Mrs. Wallace looked very grave. 'I think, my darling, things are better, perhaps, as they are.'

'What! better that dear Mr. Felspar should not come to my wedding? You can't mean that?'

'Yes, I do; just that. I think it would have been a great trial to him. It is not only William and I who have to make up our minds to part with you to Mr. Vernon, my darling.'

Then Ella began to sob and tremble as she had never done in her life. 'I never dreamt of such a thing,' she said.

'Of course not. He was too careful and unselfish for that.'

'And he always praised dear Walter so,' murmured Ella faintly.

'He acted like a loyal friend and a true gentleman, my darling; but it cost him something, you may be very sure.'

'Do you think Walter knows about it?' she faltered.

'I am sure he doesn't, my darling; he would not be so happy if he did, even though he has won you. You must never tell him; only keep a corner of your honest heart for the loser, for he deserves it.'

The day before the wedding there arrived a marriage gift from Mr. Felspar which (read by this new light) deepened Ella's sorrow for him, while it touched the unconscious Vernon to the core.

'Just look what the dear fellow writes,' he said, putting Felspar's letter into her hand.

'I send you, my dear Walter, that which of all my possessions you will prize the most—your wife's portrait, painted from the sketch I took at Wallington on the very day (do you remember?) when you first confided to me your love for her. We are such old friends that nothing I can say in the way of affection will be new to you. When I write that you are worthy of her there remains, indeed, in the way of eulogy, nothing to be said.'

'Now I call that most charming and touching,' exclaimed Walter. 'And from what I know of the regard he bears to you, I am sure he has sent me the most precious thing in his possession.'

'God bless him!' said Ella earnestly; and she said no more.

It happened, curiously enough, that another of their wedding gifts was a picture, and painted, too, by the same hand. Miss Burt had brought with her in addition to her own present (an exquisite lace collar and cuffs of her own working) a *cadeau* from His Highness which curiously reflected the kindness and egotism of the donor. It was a paintbox of solid silver and wondrous workmanship, under the lid of which was a reduced copy of his own portrait by Mr. Felspar, and beneath it the autograph, 'Charles Edward,' in hereditary handwriting.



‘Mr. Heyton desired to be most respectfully remembered to you, my dear,’ said Miss Burt, with a mimetic movement of her hand to her heart. ‘I don’t think he would like Mr. Vernon one bit better than he liked Mr. Felspar,’ she added with droll significance, which convinced her niece that she was aware the secretary had been a rejected suitor. The old lady’s delight at hearing that the young couple, after a brief visit to London, were to pass their honeymoon, and perhaps some time beyond it, at the *Ultramarine*, was charming to witness.

On the very morning of the wedding there arrived a beautiful portfolio for holding drawings, of such a gigantic size that, since Ella’s modest luggage included no ark of the fashionable kind, it could be packed nowhere, but had to travel on the seat beside them, like a third passenger. It was labelled, ‘A trifle from Wallington’ (as if it had been a sixpenny mug), and was supposed (and rightly) to have come from Dr. Cooper.

A week afterwards Ella found herself on the same noble road on which, but two years ago, we were first introduced to her under very different circumstances. Above the trees upon her right stood up the towers of Barton Castle, with the flag flying from its summit about which her then companion had inquired with such unaccustomed curiosity. By her side was now her husband. She was quite happy, but her happiness was tinged with a certain tender gravity not common with brides. In yonder churchyard lay the father, who, with all his faults, had loved her dearly; the old friend, who would have showed himself friendly in a hundred ways, if she would have permitted him to do so; and the little child snatched so prematurely from his loving arms. All lay together there at rest.

What experiences, too, had she herself undergone in those few fateful months! She had tried dependence, and might have tried independence (for her earnings with her pencil were now quite sufficient to have maintained her) but that her good friends at Foracre Farm had forbidden the experiment, and now, again, she was no longer her own, but her husband’s. They would both have to work hard; but labour was sweet to both of them, and to live frugally a necessity which had no terrors for them.

‘I am afraid, Walter,’ said she presently, ‘that we shall find living at the *Ultramarine* a little expensive. I hope that you will not prolong your stay there upon my account. Could we not move in a day or two to your old lodgings at Clover Cottage?’

‘My darling,’ said Walter admiringly, ‘there is this delightful peculiarity about you, which alone would render you the most charming woman in the world, if you had not a thousand other attractions; you always say exactly the right thing in the right place. My desire, of course, is to please you; and, as it struck me that you might possibly prefer lodgings to the hotel, I have actually bespoken them.’

‘What, at Clover Cottage?’

'Well, no, because Felspar is in occupation of it. That is another surprise I had for you. He wrote yesterday to say that feeling he "had behaved in a most selfish and unfriendly way" (that is how he talks of having obeyed an urgent necessity) "in not having been present at your wedding, he means to be at Wallington to welcome you." I wrote to him in your name, to say how delighted you would be to see his friendly face again.'

'And so I am, Walter.'

'I knew you would be. Well, Clover Cottage being full, it doesn't seem to strike you that there are no other lodgings in Wallington. But it so happens, that since your time—indeed a few months after you went to Barton—rather a pretty little cottage was built at Abbot's Creek (the very place where our dear friend Mr. Aird lost his locket, if you remember), and I have taken that for a month or two.'

The carriage, indeed, turned southward as he spoke, so as to leave Wallington on the right, and presently drove up in front of the house in question. It was new, of course; but being picturesquely built of stone, with creepers trained over it, and being placed in a lovely garden, it was neither crude nor staring. Through the open windows the sitting-room looked very pretty and charmingly furnished.

'What a naughty, extravagant boy you are, Walter!' she whispered, so that the maid who stood to welcome them at the door should not hear her; 'the rent of such a palace as this will ruin us in a month.'

He laughed in his light way, and said, 'Not quite.'

Ella stepped into the little drawing-room while Walter was 'settling' for the carriage, and the servants were taking the luggage upstairs, and looked about her. The windows opened on the sequestered cove which she so well remembered, and within everything was tasteful and pretty, and, above all, reminded her of a husband's care. Her picture, sent on direct from Devonshire, already hung upon the wall, and on the table were her favourite books. Among them was 'Fortescue's Ballads from English History.' She noticed, however, it was not her own copy, and in the fly-leaf read these words in Walter's handwriting: 'Illustrated by his beloved wife.'

He found her sitting over it, as Mrs. Wallace afterwards described her relations to the little volume, 'like a hen with one chick.'

'That is another surprise which you have discovered for yourself,' said Walter smiling.

'How could you, could you, deceive me so?' cried Ella piti-fully. 'Suppose I hadn't liked the poems?'

'Well, then I should never have told you about them. But didn't you guess the truth, when Felspar used to run them down, and protest they were not half good enough for the illustrations?'

'No, I never guessed. I only admired them very much.'

‘Oh, you flatterer!’ Here ensued what ancient writers term ‘a love passage.’

‘And did Mr. Felspar know about it all along? When he was at Barton, for instance?’

‘No; I could not trust him with such a secret. He learnt it, however, soon afterwards.’

‘Then you were my first patron, Mr. Fortescue?’

‘Nay; I had only the happiness of convincing Messrs. Pater and Son of your genius.’

‘Oh, you flatterer!’ Here ensued again what ancient writers, ‘&c.’

‘This is all too delightful to last,’ sighed Ella, referring, of course, to the situation generally. ‘As I said before, we shall be ruined by the mere rent of such a paradise as this.’

‘But we don’t pay any rent. The fact is, my dear, though it is true I am as poor as Job, I have married an heiress?’

‘What do you mean, Walter?’

‘Come, there is one surprise I am glad to see that you have not found out for yourself. But hadn’t you better take off your bonnet? Very good. You are consumed with curiosity, I see, to know the whole story. When your poor father lay on his death-bed, Ella, he extracted a promise from me. It was very wise and right of him from his point of view, and indeed, as things have turned out, from all points. He had no other object in his mind but the comfort and happiness of his child, and she must never think otherwise. You understand that.’

She was trembling very much, and it was easy for her to nod her head, but she could not trust herself to speak. What promise could that have been which her Walter made—and kept, of that she felt certain—at that dreadful far-back time, which just now, however, recurred to her as if it were yesterday?

‘I promised your poor father that I would never ask you to marry me unless I had a thousand a year of my own. It was wrong, of course—wrong of me, that is—(for he had felt her start and shudder), since I ought to have known my own incompetence to earn such a sum. I ought to have pleaded with him against the very love that strove to shield you from poverty and discomfort. But I did not do so. I gave my promise. What it cost me to keep it there is no need to talk about. I have been repaid a hundred times for all; and, as I have said, he who imposed it had nothing but your happiness in view. Soon afterwards, thanks to Felspar, who has been our good genius all along, Mr. Aird became aware of—of—what I have just told you. You know how tenderly attached he was to you, and how he strove to show it in his lifetime, though for reasons of your own you would never permit it. That reason, with which he was made acquainted by Felspar, guided his conduct afterwards. When poor little Davey died, for whom of course he had designed his fortune, he made a will which, but for that reason, would

without doubt have been in your favour. As it was, he left the bulk of his property, 25,000*l.*, to me, in trust (for so he intended it, though it was not so mentioned) to yourself. Being convinced of our mutual affection, he in fact endowed me with the means of marrying you while still keeping my promise. When I came down with him to Wallington I had, of course, no suspicion of his kind intentions; the first hint of them I received from his own lips, as he lay dying at Clover Cottage, after being brought ashore from the steamer. He whispered to me as I sat beside his bed, "You are the last man in all the world, Walter, who should have tried to save my worthless life; yet if you had known all you would have done it just the same." And then he smiled, oh, so tenderly! and bade me kiss you for him when he should be laid with Davey.'

There were tears in the eyes of both husband and wife when Walter had got thus far.

'There is no more to tell, my darling,' he continued, after a long silence, 'except that, of course, I made over the money to you as soon as lawyers could do it; they are not very quick about it, you know, and I couldn't wait, or else perhaps I ought to have told you that you were an heiress before asking you to be my wife. That might have made all the difference, might it not? It was gaining your consent under false pretences. But again, I was obliged to ask you, while I nominally had the money, in order to keep my promise. You see I was in a very awkward position.'

At all events he had now exchanged it for a very pleasant one, for there had once more ensued what ancient writers, '&c., &c.' It must be remembered that it was but the first week of their honeymoon.

The only guests at the *Ultramarine*, who had been there in the old time, were the once suspected bride and her husband; but curiously enough, on the very morning after Ella's arrival at her new home, she received a letter from Mrs. Armytage, written from abroad, and forwarded to her from Foracre Farm. It was very evident from the contents that she had heard nothing of her marriage or of her engagement to Walter. It appeared to have been written *à propos* of some pictures of Ella's in an illustrated paper which the writer had come across. She complimented her upon them very highly, and held out hopes that on her return from the Continent she might give her a commission. The whole communication was in quite her own manner of patronage and condescension. It, however, contained some news of certain old acquaintances. 'You have heard, I suppose, of that idiotic old Mrs. Jennynge's second marriage to the Count Maraschino. She picked him up at Venice, where he represented himself to her as one of its ancient nobility. I hear that he was a pastrycook at Naples. Her money, however, fortunately for her daughter—I have no patience with the woman herself—was settled upon her very tightly. They say he beats her. I hear you have taken up



your abode with the Wallaces. They are no doubt worthy people; but Refinement is hardly to be expected at a farm, and you must find it a sad change from your old life. However, as soon as you make money by your profession, which I hear you are in a fair way to do, you will, of course, leave them. I was sorry to learn how shamefully Mr. Aird—or rather Mr. Vernon—had behaved to you. The idea of his coming round that poor old man in his dotage and getting all his money! I think, considering all things, he might have remembered *you*. Mr. Felspar, too, seems by all accounts to have feathered his own nest, which from what I heard of him from Mrs. Jennynge—he behaved most graspingly about a picture—I am not the least surprised at; but of Mr. Vernon I thought better; though indeed what can one expect of a man who has to live by his wits?’

There was a good deal more of it, which made Ella exceedingly angry and Walter absolutely scream with laughter.

After all, however, what does it matter, as she soon persuaded herself, what such people think of one, or even of one’s husband? The good opinion of others is worth having only if they themselves are worthy.

At Wallington this happy young couple were surrounded by those who loved them. Mr. Felspar was a constant guest at the Creek. Dr. Cooper used to declare that if he were asked so often to partake of their hospitality, he should be obliged, in justice to his patients, to charge as for a professional visit. Miss Burt had leave from His Highness to see her niece whenever she pleased, and always came laden with grapes and peaches, or the flowers ‘so beloved by my ancestor, Cardinal York.’

Mr. and Mrs. Wallace had a room at Creek Cottage always reserved for them, called the Foracre Room. The good yeoman’s wife and Miss Burt struck up a close friendship together, and were never tired of talking of their common darling Ella.

They were speculating one day on what would have happened in case good Mr. Aird had not made things so easy for the young couple.

‘Heaven only knows,’ said Mrs. Wallace; ‘but I think, somehow, what *has* happened must have happened sooner or later. Walter and she were made for one another.’

‘But not ready made,’ urged Miss Burt, looking up from her lace-work. ‘The barrier between them, Mr. Vernon has told me, was insurmountable by his own efforts. If I had never believed in a special Providence, the drowning of that dear Mr. Aird would have convinced me of its existence.’

Mrs. Wallace, with tears in her eyes for his sad fate, nodded lugubrious assent.

‘My belief is, however,’ continued Miss Burt, ‘that both Walter and Ella would have found consolation, if not happiness, in another way. He works so hard—even now, when there is no occasion—and loves his work so, that he could never have been a



miserable man. His life, as Mr. Felspar told Dr. Cooper, would have been a bright example of what talent—though, without positive genius—assiduity, and the love of duty can effect, had not this dreadful legacy fallen in and crushed it.

‘Then Mr. Felspar ought to be ashamed of himself, and I am very much astonished at him!’ exclaimed Mrs. Wallace indignantly.

‘Well, I am not sure that Mr. Felspar spoke quite seriously,’ observed Miss Burt apologetically; ‘that is, as to the legacy. And he’s a dear, good man, and, I believe, would sacrifice everything for his friend and Ella.’

‘I am quite sure of it,’ said Mrs. Wallace gravely. Then, after a pause, she continued; ‘You have spoken of what Walter would have done if things had turned out less fortunately for him; but how do you think Ella would have borne it?’

‘Bravely. She would have suffered, for she loved him from the first; but I don’t think she would have pined away like some young women. I never met with one so diligent, so patient, and yet with such a proper spirit. She would have said to cruel Fate, “You may do your worst, but I will do my best.”’

‘That is quite my view,’ said Mrs. Wallace, with enthusiasm, ‘And yet she was not brought up with those ideas, was she?’

‘Brought up with them!’ exclaimed Miss Burt, laying down her lace-work, and looking very unlike her ordinary self. ‘She was not, indeed; she is “A Grape from a Thorn.”’

THE END.



# CHATTO & WINDUS'S

## LIST OF BOOKS.

\* \* \* \* \*

**About.—The Fellaḥ :** An Egyptian Novel. By EDMOND ABOUT. Translated by Sir RANDAL ROBERTS. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Adams (W. Davenport), Works by :**

**A Dictionary of the Drama.** Being a comprehensive Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players, and Play-houses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest to the Present Times. Crown 8vo, half-bound, 12s. 6d. [*Preparing.*]

**Latter-Day Lyrics.** Edited by W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Quips and Quiddities.** Selected by W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Advertising, A History of,** from the Earliest Times. Illustrated by Anecdotes, Curious Specimens, and Notices of Successful Advertisers. By HENRY SAMPSON. Crown 8vo, with Coloured Frontispiece and Illustrations, cloth gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Agony Column (The) of "The Times,"** from 1800 to 1870. Edited, with an Introduction, by ALICE CLAY. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Aide (Hamilton), Works by :**  
**Carr of Carrylon.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Confidences.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Alexander (Mrs.).—Maid, Wife, or Widow?** A Romance. By Mrs. ALEXANDER. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Allen (Grant), Works by :**

**The Evolutionist at Large.** Second Edition, revised. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 6s.

**Vignettes from Nature.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Colin Clout's Calendar.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Architectural Styles, A Handbook of.** Translated from the German of A. ROSENGARTEN, by W. COLLETT-SANDARS. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with 639 Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

**Art (The) of Amusing :** A Collection of Graceful Arts, Games, Tricks, Puzzles, and Charades. By FRANK BELLEW. With 300 Illustrations. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Artemus Ward :**

**Artemus Ward's Works:** The Works of CHARLES FARRER BROWNE, better known as ARTEMUS WARD. With Portrait and Facsimile. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Artemus Ward's Lecture on the Mormons.** With 32 Illustrations. Edited, with Preface, by EDWARD P. HINGSTON. Crown 8vo, 6d.

**The Genial Showman:** Life and Adventures of Artemus Ward. By EDWARD P. HINGSTON. With a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Ashton (John), Works by:**

A History of the Chap-Books of the Eighteenth Century. With nearly 400 Illusts., engraved in facsimile of the originals. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.  
 Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne. From Original Sources. With nearly 100 Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.  
 Humour, Wit, and Satire of the Seventeenth Century. With nearly 100 Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.  
 English Caricature and Satire on Napoleon the First. 120 Illusts. from Originals. Two Vols., demy 8vo, 28s.

**Bacteria.**—A Synopsis of the Bacteria and Yeast Fungi and Allied Species. By W. B. GROVE, B.A. With 87 Illusts. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 3s. 6d.

**Balzac's "Comedie Humaine"** and its Author. With Translations by H. H. WALKER. Post 8vo, cl. limp, 2s. 6d.

**Bankers, A Handbook of London**; together with Lists of Bankers from 1677. By F. G. HILTON PRICE. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Bardsley (Rev. C.W.), Works by:**  
 English Surnames: Their Sources and Significations. Third Ed., revised. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d. [*Preparing.*]  
 Curiosities of Puritan Nomenclature. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Bartholomew Fair, Memoirs of.** By HENRY MORLEY. With 100 Illusts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Basil, Novels by:**  
 A Drawn Game. Three Vols., cr. 8vo.  
 The Wearing of the Green. Three Vols., crown 8vo. [*Shortly.*]

**Beaconsfield, Lord: A Biography.** By T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P. Sixth Edit., New Preface. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex. 7s. 6d.

**Beauchamp. — Grantley Grange: A Novel.** By SHELSLEY BEAUCHAMP. Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Beautiful Pictures by British Artists:** A Gathering of Favourites from our Picture Galleries. In Two Series. All engraved on Steel in the highest style of Art. Edited, with Notices of the Artists, by SYDNEY ARMYTAGE, M.A. Imperial 4to, cloth extra, gilt and gilt edges, 21s. per Vol.

**Bechstein. — As Pretty as Seven**, and other German Stories. Collected by LUDWIG BECHSTEIN. With Additional Tales by the Brothers GRIMM, and 100 Illusts. by RICHTER. Small 4to, green and gold, 6s. 6d.; gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

**Beerbohm. — Wanderings in Patagonia**; or, Life among the Ostrich Hunters. By JULIUS BEERBOHM. With Illusts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Belgravia for 1884.** One Shilling Monthly, Illustrated by P. MACNAB.—Two Serial Stories are now appearing in this Magazine: "The Lover's Creed," by Mrs. CASHEL HOEY; and "The Wearing of the Green," by the Author of "Love the Debt."

\* \* Now ready, the Volume for MARCH to JUNE, 1884, cloth extra, gilt edges, 7s. 6d.; Cases for binding Vols., 2s. each.

**Belgravia Annual.** With Stories by F. W. ROBINSON, J. ARBUTHNOT WILSON, JUSTIN H. MCCARTHY, B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING, and others. Demy 8vo, with Illusts., 1s. [*Preparing.*]

**Bennett (W.C., LL.D.), Works by:**  
 A Ballad History of England. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

Songs for Sailors. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Besant (Walter) and James Rice, Novels by.** Post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s. each; cloth limp, 2s. 6d. each; or crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

Ready-Money Mortiboy.

With Harp and Crown.

This Son of Vulcan.

My Little Girl.

The Case of Mr. Lucraft.

The Golden Butterfly.

By Celia's Arbour.

The Monks of Thelema.

'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay.

The Seamy Side.

The Ten Years' Tenant.

The Chaplain of the Fleet.

**Besant (Walter), Novels by:**

All Sorts and Conditions of Men: An Impossible Story. With Illustrations by FRED. BARNARD. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s.; cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

The Captains' Room, &c. With Frontispiece by E. J. WHEELER. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.; cl. limp, 2s. 6d.

All in a Garden Fair. With 6 Illusts. by H. FURNISS. New and Cheaper Edition. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 3s. 6d.

Dorothy Forster. New and Cheaper Edition. With Illustrations by CH. GREEN. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. [*Preparing.*]

The Art of Fiction. Demy 8vo, 1s.

**Betham-Edwards (M.), Novels**  
by. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.  
each.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s. each.  
Felicia. | Kitty.

**Bewick (Thos.) and his Pupils.**  
By AUSTIN DOBSON. With 95 Illustrations. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

### Birthday Books:—

**The Starry Heavens: A Poetical Birthday Book.** Square 8vo, handsomely bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

**Birthday Flowers: Their Language and Legends.** By W. J. GORDON. Beautifully Illustrated in Colours by VIOLA BOUGHTON. In illuminated cover, crown 4to, 6s.

**The Lowell Birthday Book.** With Illusts., small 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Blackburn's (Henry) Art Handbooks.** Demy 8vo, Illustrated, uniform in size for binding.

**Academy Notes, separate years, from 1875 to 1883, each 1s.**

**Academy Notes, 1884.** With 152 Illustrations. 1s.

**Academy Notes, 1875-79.** Complete in One Vol., with nearly 600 Illusts. in Facsimile. Demy 8vo, cloth limp, 6s.

**Academy Notes, 1880-84.** Complete in One Volume, with about 700 Facsimile Illustrations. Cloth limp, 6s.

**Grosvenor Notes, 1877.** 6d.

**Grosvenor Notes, separate years, from 1878 to 1883, each 1s.**

**Grosvenor Notes, 1884.** With 78 Illustrations. 1s.

**Grosvenor Notes, 1877-82.** With upwards of 300 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, cloth limp, 6s.

**Pictures at South Kensington.** With 70 Illustrations. 1s.

**The English Pictures at the National Gallery.** 114 Illustrations. 1s.

**The Old Masters at the National Gallery.** 128 Illustrations. 1s. 6d.

**A Complete Illustrated Catalogue to the National Gallery.** With Notes by H. BLACKBURN, and 242 Illusts. Demy 8vo, cloth limp, 3s.

**Illustrated Catalogue of the Luxembourg Gallery.** Containing about 250 Reproductions after the Original Drawings of the Artists. Edited by F. G. DUMAS. Demy 8vo, 3s. 6d.

**The Paris Salon, 1884.** With over 300 Illusts. Edited by F. G. DUMAS. Demy 8vo, 3s.

### ART HANDBOOKS, continued—

**The Art Annual, 1883-4.** Edited by F. G. DUMAS. With 300 full-page Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 5s.

**Boccaccio's Decameron; or, Ten Days' Entertainment.** Translated into English, with an Introduction by THOMAS WRIGHT, F.S.A. With Portrait, and STOTHARD'S beautiful Copperplates. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Blake (William): Etchings from his Works.** By W. B. SCOTT. With descriptive Text. Folio, half-bound boards, India Proofs, 21s.

**Bowers' (G.) Hunting Sketches: Canters in Crampshire.** Oblong 4to, half-bound boards, 21s.

**Leaves from a Hunting Journal.** Coloured in facsimile of the originals. Oblong 4to, half-bound, 21s.

### Boyle (Frederick), Works by:

**Camp Notes: Stories of Sport and Adventure in Asia, Africa, and America.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated bds., 2s.

**Savage Life.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated bds., 2s.

**Brand's Observations on Popular Antiquities,** chiefly Illustrating the Origin of our Vulgar Customs, Ceremonies, and Superstitions. With the Additions of Sir HENRY ELLIS. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with numerous Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

### Bret Harte, Works by:

**Bret Harte's Collected Works.** Arranged and Revised by the Author. Complete in Five Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s. each.

Vol. I. COMPLETE POETICAL AND DRAMATIC WORKS. With Steel Portrait, and Introduction by Author.

Vol. II. EARLIER PAPERS—LUCK OF ROARING CAMP, and other Sketches—BOHEMIAN PAPERS—SPANISH AND AMERICAN LEGENDS.

Vol. III. TALES OF THE ARGONAUTS—EASTERN SKETCHES.

Vol. IV. GABRIEL CONROY.

Vol. V. STORIES—CONDENSED NOVELS, &c.

**The Select Works of Bret Harte,** in Prose and Poetry. With Introductory Essay by J. M. BELLEW, Portrait of the Author, and 50 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Gabriel Conroy: A Novel.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.



**BRET HARTE'S WORKS, continued—**

An Heiress of Red Dog, and other Stories. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.; cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

The Twins of Table Mountain. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

Luck of Roaring Camp, and other Sketches. Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

Jeff Briggs's Love Story. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.; cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

Flip. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.; cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Californian Stories (including THE TWINS OF TABLE MOUNTAIN, JEFF BRIGGS'S LOVE STORY, &c.) Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Brewer (Rev. Dr.), Works by :**

The Reader's Handbook of Allusions, References, Plots, and Stories. Fourth Edition, revised throughout, with a New Appendix, containing a COMPLETE ENGLISH BIBLIOGRAPHY. Cr. 8vo, 1,400 pp.; cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Authors and their Works, with the Dates: Being the Appendices to "The Reader's Handbook," separately printed. Cr. 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

A Dictionary of Miracles: Imitative, Realistic, and Dogmatic. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.; half-bound, 9s.

**Brewster (Sir David), Works by:**

More Worlds than One: The Creed of the Philosopher and the Hope of the Christian. With Plates. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

The Martyrs of Science: Lives of GALILEO, TYCHO BRAHE, and KEPLER. With Portraits. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

Letters on Natural Magic. A New Edition, with numerous Illustrations, and Chapters on the Being and Faculties of Man, and Additional Phenomena of Natural Magic, by J. A. SMITH. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Brillat-Savarin.—Gastronomy**

as a Fine Art. By BRILLAT-SAVARIN. Translated by R. E. ANDERSON, M.A. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Burnett (Mrs.), Novels by :**

Surly Tim, and other Stories. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

Kathleen Mavourneen. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.

Lindsay's Luck. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.

Pretty Polly Pemberton. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.

**Buchanan's (Robert) Works :**

Ballads of Life, Love, and Humour. With a Frontispiece by ARTHUR HUGHES. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Selected Poems of Robert Buchanan. With Frontispiece by T. DALZIEL. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Undertones. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

London Poems. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 6s.

The Book of Orm. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

White Rose and Red: A Love Story. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Idylls and Legends of Inverburn. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

St. Abe and his Seven Wives: A Tale of Salt Lake City. With a Frontispiece by A. B. HOUGHTON. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Robert Buchanan's Complete Poetical Works. With Steel-plate Portrait. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. [*In the press.*]

The Hebridean Isles: Wanderings in the Land of Lorne and the Outer Hebrides. With Frontispiece by W. SMALL. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

A Poet's Sketch-Book: Selections from the Prose Writings of ROBERT BUCHANAN. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 6s.

The Shadow of the Sword: A Romance. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s.

A Child of Nature: A Romance. With a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

God and the Man: A Romance. With Illustrations by FRED. BARNARD. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

The Martyrdom of Madeline: A Romance. With Frontispiece by A. W. COOPER. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

Love Me for Ever. With a Frontispiece by P. MACNAB. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

Annan Water: A Romance. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

The New Abeldar: A Romance. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

Foxglove Manor: A Novel. Three Vols., crown 8vo.

**Burton (Robert) :**

The Anatomy of Melancholy. A New Edition, complete, corrected and enriched by Translations of the Classical Extracts. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Melancholy Anatomised: Being an Abridgment, for popular use, of BURTON'S ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.



**Burton (Captain), Works by :**

**To the Gold Coast for Gold :** A Personal Narrative. By RICHARD F. BURTON and VERNEY LOVETT CAMERON. With Maps and Frontispiece. Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 21s.

**The Book of the Sword :** Being a History of the Sword and its Use in all Countries, from the Earliest Times. By RICHARD F. BURTON. With over 400 Illustrations. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 32s.

**Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.**

Edited by Rev. T. SCOTT. With 17 Steel Plates by STOTHARD, engraved by GOODALL, and numerous Woodcuts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Byron (Lord) :**

**Byron's Letters and Journals.** With Notices of his Life. By THOMAS MOORE. A Reprint of the Original Edition, newly revised, with Twelve full-page Plates. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Byron's Don Juan.** Complete in One Vol., post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Cameron (Commander) and**

**Captain Burton.—To the Gold Coast for Gold :** A Personal Narrative. By RICHARD F. BURTON and VERNEY LOVETT CAMERON. With Frontispiece and Maps. Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 21s.

**Cameron (Mrs. H. Lovett),**  
Novels by :

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each ;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Juliet's Guardian.**

**Deceivers Ever.**

**Campbell.—White and Black :**

Travels in the United States. By Sir GEORGE CAMPBELL, M.P. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 14s.

**Carlyle (Thomas) :**

**Thomas Carlyle : Letters and Recollections.** By MONCURE D. CONWAY, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 6s.

**On the Choice of Books.** By THOMAS CARLYLE. With a Life of the Author by R. H. SHEPHERD. New and Revised Edition, post 8vo, cloth extra, illustrated, 1s. 6d.

**The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834 to 1872.** Edited by CHARLES ELIOT NORTON. With Portraits. Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 24s.

**Chapman's (George) Works :**

Vol. I. contains the Plays complete, including the doubtful ones. Vol. II., the Poems and Minor Translations, with an Introductory Essay by ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. Vol. III., the Translations of the Iliad and Odyssey. Three Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 18s. ; or separately, 6s. each.

**Chatto & Jackson.—A Treatise**

**on Wood Engraving, Historical and Practical.** By WM. ANDREW CHATTO and JOHN JACKSON. With an Additional Chapter by HENRY G. BOHN ; and 450 fine Illustrations. A Reprint of the last Revised Edition. Large 4to, half-bound, 28s.

**Chaucer :**

**Chaucer for Children : A Golden Key.** By Mrs. H. R. HAWES. With Eight Coloured Pictures and numerous Woodcuts by the Author. New Ed., small 4to, cloth extra, 6s.

**Chaucer for Schools.** By Mrs. H. R. HAWES. Demy 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**City (The) of Dream : A Poem.**

Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s. [*In the press.*]

**Cobban.—The Cure of Souls :**

**A Story.** By J. MACLAREN COBBAN. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Collins (C. Allston).—The Bar**

**Sinister : A Story.** By C. ALLSTON COLLINS. Post 8vo, illustrated bds., 2s.

**Collins (Mortimer & Frances),**

Novels by :

**Sweet and Twenty.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Frances.** Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Blacksmith and Scholar.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**The Village Comedy.** Post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s. ; cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**You Play Me False.** Post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s. ; cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Collins (Mortimer), Novels by :**

**Sweet Anne Page.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Transmigration.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**From Midnight to Midnight.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. ; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**A Fight with Fortune.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Collins (Wilkie), Novels by.**

Each post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s;  
cloth limp, 2s. 6d.; or crown 8vo,  
cloth extra, illustrated, 3s. 6d.

**Antonina.** Illust. by A. CONCANEN.

**Basil.** Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and J. MAHONEY.

**Hide and Seek.** Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and J. MAHONEY.

**The Dead Secret.** Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and A. CONCANEN.

**Queen of Hearts** Illustrated by Sir JOHN GILBERT and A. CONCANEN.

**My Miscellanies.** With Illustrations by A. CONCANEN, and a Steel-plate Portrait of WILKIE COLLINS.

**The Woman in White.** With Illustrations by Sir JOHN GILBERT and F. A. FRASER.

**The Moonstone.** With Illustrations by G. DU MAURIER and F. A. FRASER.

**Man and Wife.** Illust. by W. SMALL.

**Poor Miss Finch.** Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and EDWARD HUGHES.

**Miss or Mrs. P.** With Illustrations by S. L. FILDES and HENRY WOODS.

**The New Magdalen.** Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and C. S. RANDS.

**The Frozen Deep.** Illustrated by G. DU MAURIER and J. MAHONEY.

**The Law and the Lady.** Illustrated by S. L. FILDES and SYDNEY HALL.

**The Two Destinies.**

**The Haunted Hotel.** Illustrated by ARTHUR HOPKINS.

**The Fallen Leaves.**

**Jezebel's Daughter.**

**The Black Robe.**

**Heart and Science: A Story of the Present Time.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**"I Say No."** Three Vols., crown 8vo. [Shortly.]

**Colman's Humorous Works:**

"Broad Grins," "My Nightgown and Slippers," and other Humorous Works, Prose and Poetical, of GEORGE COLMAN. With Life by G. B. BUCKSTONE, and Frontispiece by HOGARTH. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Convalescent Cookery: A**

Family Handbook. By CATHERINE RYAN. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Conway (Moncure D.), Works by:**

**Demonology and Devil-Lore.** Two Vols., royal 8vo, with 65 Illusts., 28s.

**CONWAY'S (M. D.) WORKS, continued—**

**A Necklace of Stories.** Illustrated by W. J. HENNESSY. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**The Wandering Jew.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Thomas Carlyle: Letters and Recollections.** With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Cook (Dutton), Works by:**

**Hours with the Players.** With a Steel Plate Frontispiece. New and Cheaper Edit., cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Nights at the Play: A View of the English Stage.** New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Leo: A Novel.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Paul Foster's Daughter.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Cooper.—Heart Salvage, by**

Sea and Land. Stories by Mrs. COOPER (KATHARINE SAUNDERS). Three Vols., crown 8vo.

**Copyright. — A Handbook of**

English and Foreign Copyright in Literary and Dramatic Works. By SIDNEY JERROLD, of the Middle Temple, Esq., Barrister-at-Law. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Cornwall.—Popular Romances**

of the West of England; or, The Drolls, Traditions, and Superstitions of Old Cornwall. Collected and Edited by ROBERT HUNT, F.R.S. New and Revised Edition, with Additions, and Two Steel-plate Illustrations by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Creasy.—Memoirs of Eminent**

Etonians: with Notices of the Early History of Eton College. By Sir EDWARD CREASY, Author of "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with 13 Portraits, 7s. 6d.

**Cruikshank (George):**

**The Comic Almanack.** Complete in Two SERIES: The First from 1835 to 1843; the SECOND from 1844 to 1853. A Gathering of the BEST HUMOUR OF THACKERAY, HOOD, MAYHEW, ALBERT SMITH, A'BECKETT, ROBERT BROUGH, &c. With 2,000 Woodcuts and Steel Engravings by CRUIKSHANK, HINE, LANDELLS, &c. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt, two very thick volumes, 7s. 6d. each.

**CRUIKSHANK (G.), continued—**

**The Life of George Cruikshank.** By BLANCHARD JERROLD, Author of "The Life of Napoleon III.," &c. With 84 Illustrations. New and Cheaper Edition, enlarged, with Additional Plates, and a very carefully compiled Bibliography. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Robinson Crusoe.** A beautiful reproduction of Major's Edition, with 37 Woodcuts and Two Steel Plates by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, choicely printed. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. A few Large-Paper copies, printed on hand-made paper, with India proofs of the Illustrations, 36s.

**Cussans.—Handbook of Heraldry;** with Instructions for Tracing Pedigrees and Deciphering Ancient MSS., &c. By JOHN E. CUSSANS. Entirely New and Revised Edition, illustrated with over 400 Woodcuts and Coloured Plates. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Cyphes.—Hearts of Gold: A Novel.** By WILLIAM CYPHES. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Daniel.—Merrie England in the Olden Time.** By GEORGE DANIEL. With Illustrations by ROBT. CRUIKSHANK. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Daudet.—Port Salvation; or, The Evangelist.** By ALPHONSE DAUDET. Translated by C. HARRY MELTZER. With Portrait of the Author. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Davenant.—What shall my Son be? Hints for Parents on the Choice of a Profession or Trade for their Sons.** By FRANCIS DAVENANT, M.A. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Davies (Dr. N. E.), Works by :**

**One Thousand Medical Maxims.** Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Nursery Hints: A Mother's Guide.** Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Aids to Long Life.** Crown 8vo, 2s.; cloth limp, 2s. 6d. [Shortly.]

**Davies' (Sir John) Complete Poetical Works,** including Psalms I. to L. in Verse, and other hitherto Unpublished MSS., for the first time Collected and Edited, with Memorial-Introduction and Notes, by the Rev. A. B. GROSART, D.D. Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth boards, 12s.

**De Maistre.—A Journey Round My Room.** By XAVIER DE MAISTRE. Translated by HENRY ATTWELL. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**De Mille.—A Castle in Spain. A Novel.** By JAMES DE MILLE. With a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Derwent (Leith), Novels by :**

**Our Lady of Tears.** Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Circe's Lovers.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Dickens (Charles), Novels by :**

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Sketches by Boz.** | Nicholas Nickleby.  
**Pickwick Papers.** | Oliver Twist.

**The Speeches of Charles Dickens.** (*Mayfair Library.*) Post 8vo, cloth mp, 2s. 6d.

**The Speeches of Charles Dickens, 1841-1870.** With a New Bibliography, revised and enlarged. Edited and Prefaced by RICHARD HERNE SHEPHERD. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**About England with Dickens.** By ALFRED RIMMER. With 57 Illustrations by C. A. VANDERHOOF, ALFRED RIMMER, and others. Sq. 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

**Dictionaries :**

**A Dictionary of Miracles: Imitative, Realistic, and Dogmatic.** By the Rev. E. C. BREWER, LL.D. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.; hf.-bound, 9s.

**The Reader's Handbook of Allusions, References, Plots, and Stories.** By the Rev. E. C. BREWER, LL.D. Fourth Edition, revised throughout, with a New Appendix, containing a Complete English Bibliography. Crown 8vo, 1,400 pages, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Authors and their Works, with the Dates.** Being the Appendices to "The Reader's Handbook," separately printed. By the Rev. E. C. BREWER, LL.D. Crown 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Familiar Allusions: A Handbook of Miscellaneous Information;** including the Names of Celebrated Statues, Paintings, Palaces, Country Seats, Ruins, Churches, Ships, Streets, Clubs, Natural Curiosities, and the like. By WM. A. WHEELER and CHARLES G. WHEELER. Demy 8vo cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

DICTIONARIES, *continued*—

**Short Sayings of Great Men.** With Historical and Explanatory Notes. By SAMUEL A. BENT, M.A. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**A Dictionary of the Drama:** Being a comprehensive Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players, and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest to the Present Times. By W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. A thick volume, crown 8vo, half-bound, 12s. 6d. [*In preparation.*]

**The Slang Dictionary:** Etymological, Historical, and Anecdotal. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s. 6d.

**Words, Facts, and Phrases:** A Dictionary of Curious, Quaint, and Out-of-the-Way Matters. By ELIEZER EDWARDS. New and Cheaper Issue. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.; hf.-bd., 9s.

**Diderot.**—**The Paradox of Acting.** Translated, with Annotations, from Diderot's "Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien," by WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK. With a Preface by HENRY IRVING. Cr. 8vo, in parchment, 4s. 6d.

**Dobson (W. T.), Works by :**

**Literary Frivolities, Fancies, Follies, and Frolics.** Post 8vo, cl. 1p., 2s. 6d.  
**Poetical Ingenuities and Eccentricities.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Doran.**—**Memories of our Great Towns;** with Anecdotic Gleanings concerning their Worthies and their Oddities. By Dr. JOHN DORAN, F.S.A. With 38 Illustrations. New and Cheaper Ed., cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.

**Drama, A Dictionary of the.**

Being a comprehensive Guide to the Plays, Playwrights, Players, and Playhouses of the United Kingdom and America, from the Earliest to the Present Times. By W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. (Uniform with BREWER'S "Reader's Handbook.") Crown 8vo, half-bound, 12s. 6d. [*In preparation.*]

**Dramatists, The Old.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Vignette Portraits, 6s. per Vol.

**Ben Jonson's Works.** With Notes Critical and Explanatory, and a Biographical Memoir by WM. GIFFORD. Edited by Colonel CUNNINGHAM. Three Vols.

**Chapman's Works.** Complete in Three Vols. Vol. I. contains the Plays complete, including the doubtful ones; Vol. II., the Poems and Minor Translations, with an Introductory Essay by ALGERNON CHAS. SWINBURNE; Vol. III., the Translations of the Iliad and Odyssey.

DRAMATISTS, THE OLD, *continued*—

**Marlowe's Works.** Including his Translations. Edited, with Notes and Introduction, by Col. CUNNINGHAM. One Vol.

**Massinger's Plays.** From the Text of WILLIAM GIFFORD. Edited by Col. CUNNINGHAM. One Vol.

**Dyer.**—**The Folk-Lore of Plants.** By T. F. THISELTON DYER, M.A., &c. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. [*In preparation.*]

**Early English Poets.** Edited, with Introductions and Annotations, by Rev. A. B. GROSART, D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s. per Volume.

**Fletcher's (Giles, B.D.) Complete Poems.** One Vol.

**Davies' (Sir John) Complete Poetical Works.** Two Vols.

**Herrick's (Robert) Complete Collected Poems.** Three Vols.

**Sidney's (Sir Philip) Complete Poetical Works.** Three Vols.

**Herbert (Lord) of Cherbury's Poems.** Edited, with Introduction, by J. CHURTON COLLINS. Crown 8vo, parchment, 8s.

**Edwardes (Mrs. A.), Novels by :**

**A Point of Honour.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Archie Lovell.** Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.; crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Eggleston.**—**Roxy: A Novel.** By EDWARD EGGLESTON. Post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s.; cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Emanuel.—On Diamonds and**

**Precious Stones:** their History, Value, and Properties; with Simple Tests for ascertaining their Reality. By HARRY EMANUEL, F.R.G.S. With numerous Illustrations, tinted and plain. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 6s.

**Englishman's House, The : A**

Practical Guide to all interested in Selecting or Building a House, with full Estimates of Cost, Quantities, &c. By C. J. RICHARDSON. Third Edition. Nearly 600 Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.

**Ewald (Alex. Charles, F.S.A.),**

**Works by :**

**Stories from the State Papers.** With an Autotype Facsimile. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**The Life and Times of Prince Charles Stuart,** Count of Albany, commonly called the Young Pretender. From the State Papers and other Sources. New and Cheaper Edition, with a Portrait, crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.



**Eyes, The.**—How to Use our Eyes, and How to Preserve Them. By JOHN BROWNING, F.R.A.S., &c. With 37 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Fairholt.**—Tobacco: Its History and Associations; with an Account of the Plant and its Manufacture, and its Modes of Use in all Ages and Countries. By F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A. With Coloured Frontispiece and upwards of 100 Illustrations by the Author. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Familiar Allusions:** A Handbook of Miscellaneous Information; including the Names of Celebrated Statues, Paintings, Palaces, Country Seats, Ruins, Churches, Ships, Streets, Clubs, Natural Curiosities, and the like. By WILLIAM A. WHEELER, Author of "Noted Names of Fiction;" and CHARLES G. WHEELER. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Faraday (Michael), Works by:**  
The Chemical History of a Candle: Lectures delivered before a Juvenile Audience at the Royal Institution. Edited by WILLIAM A. CROOKES, F.C.S. Post 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Illustrations, 4s. 6d.

On the Various Forces of Nature, and their Relations to each other: Lectures delivered before a Juvenile Audience at the Royal Institution. Edited by WILLIAM A. CROOKES, F.C.S. Post 8vo, cloth extra, with numerous Illustrations, 4s. 6d.

**Fin-Bec.**—The Cupboard Papers: Observations on the Art of Living and Dining. By FIN-BEC. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Fitzgerald (Percy), Works by:**

The Recreations of a Literary Man; or, Does Writing Pay? With Recollections of some Literary Men, and a View of a Literary Man's Working Life. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

The World Behind the Scenes. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

Little Essays: Passages from the Letters of CHARLES LAMB. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.  
Bella Donna. | Never Forgotten.  
The Second Mrs. Tillotson.  
Polly.  
Seventy-five Brooke Street.  
The Lady of Brantome.

**Fletcher's (Giles, B.D.) Complete Poems:** Christ's Victorie in Heaven, Christ's Victorie on Earth, Christ's Triumph over Death, and Minor Poems. With Memorial-Introduction and Notes by the Rev. A. B. GROSART, D.D. Cr. 8vo, cloth bds., 6s.

**Fonblanque.**—Filthy Lucre: A Novel. By ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Francillon (R. E.), Novels by:**  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each;  
post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s. each.  
Olympia. | Queen Cophetua.  
One by One.

Esther's Glove. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.

A Real Queen. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 3s. 6d.

**French Literature, History of.**  
By HENRY VAN LAUN. Complete in 3 Vols., demy 8vo, cl. bds., 7s. 6d. each.

**Frere.**—Pandurang Hari; or, Memoirs of a Hindoo. With a Preface by Sir H. BARTLE FRERE, G.C.S.I., &c. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Friswell.**—One of Two: A Novel. By HAIN FRISWELL. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Frost (Thomas), Works by:**  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.  
Circus Life and Circus Celebrities.  
The Lives of the Conjurors.  
The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs.

**Fry.**—Royal Guide to the London Charities, 1884-5. By HERBERT FRY. Showing, in alphabetical order, their Name, Date of Foundation, Address, Objects, Annual Income, Chief Officials, &c. Published Annually. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Gardening Books:**

A Year's Work in Garden and Greenhouse: Practical Advice to Amateur Gardeners as to the Management of the Flower, Fruit, and Frame Garden. By GEORGE GLENNY. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Our Kitchen Garden: The Plants we Grow, and How we Cook Them. By TOM JERROLD, Author of "The Garden that Paid the Rent," &c. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Household Horticulture: A Gossip about Flowers. By TOM and JANE JERROLD. Illust. Post 8vo, cl. lp., 2s. 6d.

The Garden that Paid the Rent. By TOM JERROLD. Fcap. 8vo, illustrated cover, 1s.; cloth limp, 1s. 6d.



**Garrett.—The Capel Girls: A**  
Novel. By EDWARD GARRETT. Post  
8vo, illust. bds., 2s.; cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 3s. 6d.

**Gentleman's Magazine (The)**  
for 1884. One Shilling Monthly. A  
New Serial Story, entitled "Philistia,"  
by CECIL POWER, is now appearing.  
"Science Notes," by W. MATTIEU  
WILLIAMS, F.R.A.S., and "Table  
Talk," by SYLVANUS URBAN, are also  
continued monthly.

\* \* *Now ready, the Volume for JANUARY  
to JUNE, 1884, cloth extra, price 8s. 6d.;  
Cases for binding, 2s. each.*

**German Popular Stories.** Col-  
lected by the Brothers GRIMM, and  
Translated by EDGAR TAYLOR. Edited,  
with an Introduction, by JOHN RUSKIN.  
With 22 Illustrations on Steel by  
GEORGE CRUIKSHANK. Square 8vo,  
cloth extra, 6s. 6d.; gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

**Gibbon (Charles), Novels by:**  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Robin Gray.	Queen of the
For Lack of Gold.	Meadow.
What will the	In Pastures Green
World Say?	Braes of Yarrow.
In Honour Bound.	The Flower of the
In Love and War.	Forest. [lem.
For the King.	A Heart's Prob-

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

The Dead Heart.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

The Golden Shaft.

Of High Degree.

Fancy Free.

Loving a Dream.

By Mead and Stream. Three Vols.,  
crown 8vo. [Shortly.]

**Gilbert (William), Novels by:**  
Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Dr. Austin's Guests.

The Wizard of the Mountain.

James Duke, Costermonger.

**Gilbert (W. S.), Original Plays**  
by: In Two Series, each complete in  
itself, price 2s. 6d. each.

The FIRST SERIES contains—The  
Wicked World—Pygmalion and Ga-  
latea—Charity—The Princess—The  
Palace of Truth—Trial by Jury.

The SECOND SERIES contains—Bro-  
ken Hearts—Engaged—Sweethearts—  
Gretchen—Dan'l Druce—Tom Cobb—  
H.M.S. Pinafore—The Sorcerer—The  
Pirates of Penzance.

**Glenny.—A Year's Work in**  
Garden and Greenhouse: Practical  
Advice to Amateur Gardeners as to  
the Management of the Flower, Fruit,  
and Frame Garden. By GEORGE  
GLENNY. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Godwin.—Lives of the Necro-  
mancers.** By WILLIAM GODWIN.  
Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Golden Library, The:**

Square 16mo (Tauchnitz size), cloth  
limp, 2s. per volume.

Bayard Taylor's Diversions of the  
Echo Club.

Bennett's (Dr. W. C.) Ballad History  
of England.

Bennett's (Dr.) Songs for Sailors.

Byron's Don Juan.

Godwin's (William) Lives of the  
Necromancers.

Holmes's Autocrat of the Break-  
fast Table. With an Introduction  
by G. A. SALA.

Holmes's Professor at the Break-  
fast Table.

Hood's Whims and Oddities. Com-  
plete. All the original Illustrations.

Irving's (Washington) Tales of a  
Traveller.

Irving's (Washington) Tales of the  
Alhambra.

Jesse's (Edward) Scenes and Oc-  
cupations of a Country Life.

Lamb's Essays of Elia. Both Series  
Complete in One Vol.

Leigh Hunt's Essays: A Tale for a  
Chimney Corner, and other Pieces.  
With Portrait, and Introduction by  
EDMUND OLLIER.

Mallory's (Sir Thomas) Mort  
d'Arthur: The Stories of King  
Arthur and of the Knights of the  
Round Table. Edited by B. MONT-  
GOMERIE RANKING.

Pascal's Provincial Letters. A New  
Translation, with Historical Intro-  
duction and Notes, by T. M'CRIE, D.D.

Pope's Poetical Works. Complete.

Roche foucauld's Maxims and Moral  
Reflections. With Notes, and In-  
trodutory Essay by SAINTE-BEUVE.

St. Pierre's Paul and Virginia, and  
The Indian Cottage. Edited, with  
Life, by the Rev. E. CLARKE.

Shelley's Early Poems, and Queen  
Mab. With Essay by LEIGH HUNT.

Shelley's Later Poems: Laon and  
Cythna, &c.

Shelley's Posthumous Poems, the  
Shelley Papers, &c.

**GOLDEN LIBRARY, THE, continued—**

Shelley's Prose Works, including A Refutation of Deism, Zastrozzi, St. Irvyne, &c.

White's Natural History of Selborne. Edited, with Additions, by THOMAS BROWN, F.L.S.

**Golden Treasury of Thought,**

The: AN ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF QUOTATIONS from Writers of all Times and Countries. Selected and Edited by THEODORE TAYLOR. Crown 8vo, cloth gilt and gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

**Gordon Cumming (C. F.), Works by:**

In the Hebrides. With Autotype Facsimile and numerous full-page Illustrations. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 8s. 6d.

In the Himalayas and on the Indian Plains. With numerous Illustrations. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 8s. 6d.

[Shortly.]

**Graham. — The Professor's Wife: A Story.** By LEONARD GRAHAM. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.; cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

**Greeks and Romans, The Life of the,** Described from Antique Monuments. By ERNST GUHL and W. KONER. Translated from the Third German Edition, and Edited by Dr. F. HUEFFER. With 545 Illustrations. New and Cheaper Edition, demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Greenwood (James), Works by:**

The Wilds of London. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

Low-Life Deeps: An Account of the Strange Fish to be Found There. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

Dick Temple: A Novel. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Guyot.—The Earth and Man;**

or, Physical Geography in its relation to the History of Mankind. By ARNOLD GUYOT. With Additions by Professors AGASSIZ, PIERCE, and GRAY; 12 Maps and Engravings on Steel, some Coloured, and copious Index. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 4s. 6d.

**Hair (The): Its Treatment in**

Health, Weakness, and Disease. Translated from the German of Dr. J. PINCUS. Crown 8vo, 1s.

**Hake (Dr. Thomas Gordon),**

Poems by:

Maiden Ecstasy. Small 4to, cloth extra, 8s.

**Hake's (Dr. T. G.) POEMS, continued—**

New Symbols. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Legends of the Morrow. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

The Serpent Play. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Hall.—Sketches of Irish Cha-**

acter. By Mrs. S. C. HALL. With numerous Illustrations on Steel and Wood by MACLISE, GILBERT, HARVEY, and G. CRUIKSHANK. Medium 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Halliday.—Every-day Papers.**

By ANDREW HALLIDAY. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Handwriting, The Philosophy**

of. With over 100 Facsimiles and Explanatory Text. By DON FELIX DE SALAMANCA. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Hanky-Panky: A Collection of**

Very Easy Tricks, Very Difficult Tricks, White Magic, Sleight of Hand, &c. Edited by W. H. CREMER. With 200 Illusts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Hardy (Lady Duffus).—Paul**

Wynter's Sacrifice: A Story. By Lady DUFFUS HARDY. Post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s.

**Hardy (Thomas).—Under the**

Greenwood Tree. By THOMAS HARDY, Author of "Far from the Madding Crowd." Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated bds., 2s.

**Haweis (Mrs. H. R.), Works by:**

The Art of Dress. With numerous Illustrations. Small 8vo, illustrated cover, 1s.; cloth limp, 1s. 6d.

The Art of Beauty. New and Cheaper Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Coloured Frontispiece and Illustrations, 6s.

The Art of Decoration. Square 8vo, handsomely bound and profusely illustrated, 10s. 6d.

Chaucer for Children: A Golden Key. With Eight Coloured Pictures and numerous Woodcuts. New Edition, small 4to, cloth extra, 6s.

Chaucer for Schools. Demy 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Haweis (Rev. H. R.).—American**

Humorists. Including WASHINGTON IRVING, OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, ARTEMUS WARD, MARK TWAIN, and BRET HARTE. By the Rev. H. R. HAWEIS, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Hawthorne (Julian), Novels by.**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each ;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Garth. | Sebastian Strome.

Ellice Quentin. | Dust.

Prince Saroni's Wife.

Mrs. Gainsborough's Diamonds.

Fcap. 8vo, illustrated cover, 1s. ;  
cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

Fortune's Fool.

Beatrice Randolph. With Illustrations  
by A. FREDERICKS.

Mercy Holland, and other Stories.  
Three Vols., crown 8vo. [Shortly.]

**IMPORTANT NEW BIOGRAPHY.**

**Hawthorne (Nathaniel) and  
his Wife.** By JULIAN HAWTHORNE.  
With 6 Steel-plate Portraits. Two  
Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 24s.

[Twenty-five copies of an *Edition de Luxe*, printed on the best hand-made paper, large 8vo size, and with India proofs of the Illustrations, are reserved for sale in England, price 48s. per set. Immediate application should be made by anyone desiring a copy of this special and very limited Edition.]

**Heath (F. G.). — My Garden**

Wild, and What I Grew There. By  
FRANCIS GEORGE HEATH, Author of  
"The Fern World," &c. Crown 8vo,  
cl. ex., 5s. ; cl. gilt, gilt edges, 6s.

**Helps (Sir Arthur), Works by :**

Animals and their Masters. Post  
8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Social Pressure. Post 8vo, cloth limp,  
2s. 6d.

Ivan de Biron: A Novel. Crown 8vo,  
cloth extra, 3s. 6d. ; post 8vo, illus-  
trated boards, 2s.

**Heptalogia (The) ; or, The  
Seven against Sense.** A Cap with  
Seven Bells. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Herbert.—The Poems of Lord**

Herbert of Cherbury. Edited, with  
Introduction, by J. CHURTON COLLINS.  
Crown 8vo, bound in parchment, 8s.

**Herrick's (Robert) Hesperides,**

Noble Numbers, and Complete Col-  
lected Poems. With Memorial-Intro-  
duction and Notes by the Rev. A. B.  
GROSART, D.D., Steel Portrait, Index  
of First Lines, and Glossarial Index,  
&c. Three Vols., crown 8vo, cloth, 18s.

**Hesse - Wartegg (Chevalier**

Ernst von), Works by :

Tunis: The Land and the People.  
With 22 Illustrations. Crown 8vo,  
cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

The New South-West: Travelling  
Sketches from Kansas, New Mexico,  
Arizona, and Northern Mexico.  
With 100 fine Illustrations and Three  
Maps. Demy 8vo, cloth extra,  
14s. [In preparation.]

**Hindley (Charles), Works by :**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

Tavern Anecdotes and Sayings: In-  
cluding the Origin of Signs, and  
Reminiscences connected with  
Taverns, Coffee Houses, Clubs, &c.  
With Illustrations.

The Life and Adventures of a Cheap  
Jack. By One of the Fraternity.  
Edited by CHARLES HINDLEY.

**Hoey.—The Lover's Creed.**

By Mrs. CASHEL HOEY. With 12 Illus-  
trations by P. MACNAB. Three Vols.,  
crown 8vo. [Shortly.]

**Holmes (O. Wendell), Works by :**

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-  
Table. Illustrated by J. GORDON  
THOMSON. Post 8vo, cloth limp,  
2s. 6d. ; another Edition in smaller  
type, with an Introduction by G. A.  
SALA. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

The Professor at the Breakfast-  
Table ; with the Story of Iris. Post  
8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Holmes. — The Science of**

Voice Production and Voice Preser-  
vation: A Popular Manual for the  
Use of Speakers and Singers. By  
GORDON HOLMES, M.D. Crown 8vo,  
cloth limp, with Illustrations, 2s. 6d.

**Hood (Thomas) :**

Hood's Choice Works, in Prose and  
Verse. Including the Cream of the  
Comic Annuals. With Life of the  
Author, Portrait, and 200 Illustra-  
tions. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Hood's Whims and Oddities. Com-  
plete. With all the original Illus-  
trations. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Hood (Tom), Works by :**

From Nowhere to the North Pole:

A Noah's Arkæological Narrative.  
With 25 Illustrations by W. BRUN-  
TON and E. C. BARNES. Square  
crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt edges, 6s.

A Golden Heart: A Novel. Post 8vo,  
illustrated boards, 2s.

**Hook's (Theodore) Choice Humorous Works**, including his Ludicrous Adventures, Bons Mots, Puns and Hoaxes. With a New Life of the Author, Portraits, Facsimiles, and Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, gilt, 7s. 6d.

**Hooper.—The House of Raby :**  
A Novel. By Mrs. GEORGE HOOPER.  
Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Horne.—Orion : An Epic Poem**, in Three Books. By RICHARD HENGIST HORNE. With Photographic Portrait from a Medallion by SUMMERS. Tenth Edition, crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s.

**Howell.—Conflicts of Capital and Labour**, Historically and Economically considered: Being a History and Review of the Trade Unions of Great Britain, showing their Origin, Progress, Constitution, and Objects, in their Political, Social, Economical, and Industrial Aspects. By GEORGE HOWELL. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Hugo.—The Hunchback of Notre Dame.** By VICTOR HUGO. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Hunt.—Essays by Leigh Hunt.**  
A Tale for a Chimney Corner, and other Pieces. With Portrait and Introduction by EDMUND OLLIER. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Hunt (Mrs. Alfred), Novels by :**  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.  
Thornicroft's Model.  
The Leaden Casket.  
Self-Condemed.

**Ingelow.—Fated to be Free :** A Novel. By JEAN INGELow. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Irish Wit and Humour, Songs of.** Collected and Edited by A. PERCEVAL GRAVES. Post 8vo, cl. limp, 2s. 6d.

**Irving (Washington), Works by :**  
Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. each.  
Tales of a Traveller.  
Tales of the Alhambra.

**Janvier.—Practical Ceramics for Students.** By CATHERINE A. JANVIER. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Jay (Harriett), Novels by.** Each crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; or post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.  
The Dark Colleen.  
The Queen of Connaught.

**Jefferies (Richard), Works by :**  
Nature near London. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.  
The Life of the Fields. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Jennings (H. J.), Works by :**  
Curiosities of Criticism. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.  
Lord Tennyson: A Biographical Sketch. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.  
[In the press.]

**Jennings (Hargrave).—The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries.** With Chapters on the Ancient Fire and Serpent Worshipers. By HARGRAVE JENNINGS. With Five full-page Plates and upwards of 300 Illustrations. A New Edition, crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Jerrold (Tom), Works by :**  
The Garden that Paid the Rent. By TOM JERROLD. Fcap. 8vo, illustrated cover, 1s.; cloth limp, 1s. 6d.  
Household Horticulture: A Gossip about Flowers. By TOM and JANE JERROLD. Illust. Post 8vo, cl. lp., 2s. 6d.  
Our Kitchen Garden: The Plants we Grow, and How we Cook Them. By TOM JERROLD. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Jesse.—Scenes and Occupations of a Country Life.** By EDWARD JESSE. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Jones (Wm., F.S.A.), Works by :**  
Finger-Ring Lore: Historical, Legendary, and Anecdotal. With over 200 Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.  
Credulities, Past and Present; including the Sea and Seamen, Miners, Talismans, Word and Letter Divination, Exorcising and Blessing of Animals, Birds, Eggs, Luck, &c. With an Etched Frontispiece. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.  
Crowns and Coronations: A History of Regalia in all Times and Countries. With One Hundred Illustrations. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Jonson's (Ben) Works.** With Notes Critical and Explanatory, and a Biographical Memoir by WILLIAM GIFFORD. Edited by Colonel CUNNINGHAM. Three Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 18s.; or separately, 6s. each.

**Josephus, The Complete Works of.** Translated by WHISTON. Containing both "The Antiquities of the Jews" and "The Wars of the Jews." Two Vols., 8vo, with 52 Illustrations and Maps, cloth extra, gilt, 14s.



**Kavanagh.—The Pearl Fountain, and other Fairy Stories.** By BRIDGET and JULIA KAVANAGH. With Thirty Illustrations by J. MOYR SMITH. Small 8vo, cloth gilt, 6s.

**Kempt.—Pencil and Palette:** Chapters on Art and Artists. By ROBERT KEMPT. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Kingsley (Henry), Novels by:** Each crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; or post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

Oakshott Castle. | Number Seventeen

**Knight.—The Patient's Vade Mecum:** How to get most Benefit from Medical Advice. By WILLIAM KNIGHT, M.R.C.S., and EDWARD KNIGHT, L.R.C.P. Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Lamb (Charles):**

**Mary and Charles Lamb:** Their Poems, Letters, and Remains. With Reminiscences and Notes by W. CAREW HAZLITT. With HANCOCK'S Portrait of the Essayist, Facsimiles of the Title-pages of the rare First Editions of Lamb's and Coleridge's Works, and numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

**Lamb's Complete Works, in Prose and Verse,** reprinted from the Original Editions, with many Pieces hitherto unpublished. Edited, with Notes and Introduction, by R. H. SHEPHERD. With Two Portraits and Facsimile of Page of the "Essay on Roast Pig." Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**The Essays of Elia.** Complete Edition. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 2s.

**Poetry for Children, and Prince Dorus.** By CHARLES LAMB. Carefully reprinted from unique copies. Small 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Little Essays:** Sketches and Characters. By CHARLES LAMB. Selected from his Letters by PERCY FITZGERALD. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Lane's Arabian Nights, &c.:**

**The Thousand and One Nights:** commonly called, in England, "THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS." A New Translation from the Arabic, with copious Notes, by EDWARD WILLIAM LANE. Illustrated by many hundred Engravings on Wood, from Original Designs by WM. HARVEY. A New Edition, from a Copy annotated by the Translator, edited by his Nephew, EDWARD STANLEY POOLE. With a Preface by STANLEY LANE-POOLE. Three Vols., demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. each.

LANE'S ARABIAN NIGHTS, *continued—*

**Arabian Society in the Middle Ages:** Studies from "The Thousand and One Nights." By EDWARD WILLIAM LANE, Author of "The Modern Egyptians," &c. Edited by STANLEY LANE-POOLE. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Lares and Penates; or, The Background of Life.** By FLORENCE CADDY. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Larwood (Jacob), Works by:**

**The Story of the London Parks.** With Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Clerical Anecdotes.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Forensic Anecdotes.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Theatrical Anecdotes.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Leigh (Henry S.), Works by:**

**Carols of Cockayne.** With numerous Illustrations. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Jeux d'Esprit.** Collected and Edited by HENRY S. LEIGH. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Life in London; or, The History of Jerry Hawthorn and Corinthian Tom.** With the whole of CRUIKSHANK'S Illustrations, in Colours, after the Originals. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Linton (E. Lynn), Works by:**

Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d. each.

**Witch Stories.**

**The True Story of Joshua Davidson.**  
**Ourselves: Essays on Women.**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Patricia Kemball.

The Atonement of Leam Dundas.

The World Well Lost.

Under which Lord?

With a Silken Thread.

The Rebel of the Family.

"My Love!"

Ione.

**Locks and Keys.—On the Development and Distribution of Primitive Locks and Keys.** By Lieut.-Gen. PITT-RIVERS, F.R.S. With numerous Illustrations. Demy 4to, half Roxburgh, 16s.



**Longfellow :**

**Longfellow's Complete Prose Works.** Including "Outre Mer," "Hyperion," "Kavanagh," "The Poets and Poetry of Europe," and "Driftwood." With Portrait and Illustrations by VALENTINE BROMLEY. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Longfellow's Poetical Works.** Carefully Reprinted from the Original Editions. With numerous fine Illustrations on Steel and Wood. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Long Life, Aids to:** A Medical, Dietetic, and General Guide in Health and Disease. By N. E. DAVIES, L.R.C.P. Crown 8vo, 2s; cloth limp, 2s. 6d. [*Shortly.*]

**Lucy.—Gideon Fleyce:** A Novel. By HENRY W. LUCY. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Lusiad (The) of Camoens.** Translated into English Spenserian Verse by ROBERT FRENCH DUFF. Demy 8vo, with Fourteen full-page Plates, cloth boards, 18s.

**McCarthy (Justin, M.P.), Works by :**

**A History of Our Own Times,** from the Accession of Queen Victoria to the General Election of 1880. Four Vols. demy 8vo, cloth extra, 12s. each.—Also a POPULAR EDITION, in Four Vols. cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 6s. each.

**A Short History of Our Own Times.** One Vol., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**History of the Four Georges.** Four Vols. demy 8vo, cloth extra, 12s. each. [*Vol. I. in the press.*]

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Dear Lady Disdain.

The Waterdale Neighbours.

My Enemy's Daughter.

A Fair Saxon.

Linley Rochford

Miss Misanthrope.

Donna Quixote.

The Comet of a Season.

**Maid of Athens.** With 12 Illustrations by F. BARNARD. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**McCarthy (Justin H., M.P.), Works by :**

**Serapion, and other Poems.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**An Outline of the History of Ireland,** from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Cr. 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**England under Gladstone.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**MacDonald (George, LL.D.), Works by :**

**The Princess and Curdie.** With 11 Illustrations by JAMES ALLEN. Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Gutta-Percha Willie, the Working Genius.** With 9 Illustrations by ARTHUR HUGHES. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Paul Faber, Surgeon.** With a Frontispiece by J. E. MILLAR. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Thomas Wingfold, Curate.** With a Frontispiece by C. J. STANLAND. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Macdonell.—Quaker Cousins:**

A Novel. By AGNES MACDONELL. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Macgregor. — Pastimes and Players.** Notes on Popular Games. By ROBERT MACGREGOR. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**MacIse Portrait-Gallery (The)** of Illustrious Literary Characters; with Memoirs—Biographical, Critical, Bibliographical, and Anecdotal—illustrative of the Literature of the former half of the Present Century. By WILLIAM BATES, B.A. With 85 Portraits printed on an India Tint. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Macquoid (Mrs.), Works by :**

**In the Ardennes.** With 50 fine Illustrations by THOMAS R. MACQUOID. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

**Pictures and Legends from Normandy and Brittany.** With numerous Illustrations by THOMAS R. MACQUOID. Square 8vo, cloth gilt, 10s. 6d.

**Through Normandy.** With 90 Illustrations by T. R. MACQUOID. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Through Brittany.** With numerous Illustrations by T. R. MACQUOID. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**About Yorkshire** With 67 Illustrations by T. R. MACQUOID, Engraved by SWAIN. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

**The Evil Eye, and other Stories.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Lost Rose, and other Stories.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Mackay.—Interludes and Undertones:** or, Music at Twilight. By CHARLES MACKAY, LL.D. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Magician's Own Book (The):** Performances with Cups and Balls, Eggs, Hats, Handkerchiefs, &c. All from actual Experience. Edited by W. H. CREMER. With 200 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Magic No Mystery:** Tricks with Cards, Dice, Balls, &c., with fully descriptive Directions; the Art of Secret Writing; Training of Performing Animals, &c. With Coloured Frontispiece and many Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

**Magna Charta.** An exact Facsimile of the Original in the British Museum, printed on fine plate paper, 3 feet by 2 feet, with Arms and Seals emblazoned in Gold and Colours. Price 5s.

**Mallock (W. H.), Works by:**

**The New Republic;** or, Culture, Faith and Philosophy in an English Country House. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.; Cheap Edition, illustrated boards, 2s.

**The New Paul and Virginia;** or, Positivism on an Island. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Poems.** Small 4to, bound in parchment, 8s.

**Is Life worth Living?** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Mallory's (Sir Thomas) Mort d'Arthur:** The Stories of King Arthur and of the Knights of the Round Table. Edited by B. MONTGOMERIE RANKING. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Marlowe's Works.** Including his Translations. Edited, with Notes and Introduction, by Col. CUNNINGHAM. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Marryat (Florence), Novels by:** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; or, post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.  
Open! Sesame!  
Written in Fire.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.  
A Harvest of Wild Oats.  
A Little Stepson.  
Fighting the Air.

**Masterman.—Half a Dozen Daughters:** A Novel. By J. MASTERMAN. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Mark Twain, Works by:**

**The Choice Works of Mark Twain.** Revised and Corrected throughout by the Author. With Life, Portrait, and numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**An Idle Excursion, and other Sketches.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**The Prince and the Pauper.** With nearly 200 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**The Innocents Abroad;** or, The New Pilgrim's Progress: Being some Account of the Steamship "Quaker City's" Pleasure Excursion to Europe and the Holy Land. With 234 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. CHEAP EDITION (under the title of "MARK TWAIN'S PLEASURE TRIP"), post 8vo, illust. boards, 2s.

**A Tramp Abroad.** With 314 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.; Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**The Stolen White Elephant, &c.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Life on the Mississippi.** With about 300 Original Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.** With numerous Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. [*Preparing.*]

**Massinger's Plays.** From the Text of WILLIAM GIFFORD. Edited by Col. CUNNINGHAM. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Mayhew.—London Characters and the Humorous Side of London Life.** By HENRY MAYHEW. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Mayfair Library, The:** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d. per Volume.

**A Journey Round My Room.** By XAVIER DE MAISTRE. Translated by HENRY ATTWELL.

**Latter-Day Lyrics.** Edited by W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

**Quips and Quiddities.** Selected by W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

**The Agony Column of "The Times,"** from 1800 to 1870. Edited, with an Introduction, by ALICE CLAY.

**Balzac's "Comedie Humaine"** and its Author. With Translations by H. H. WALKER.

**Melancholy Anatomised:** A Popular Abridgment of "Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy."

MAYFAIR LIBRARY, *continued*—

Gastronomy as a Fine Art. By BRILLAT-SAVARIN.

The Speeches of Charles Dickens.

Literary Frlvolities, Fancies, Follies, and Frolics. By W. T. DOBSON.

Poetical Ingenuities and Eccentricities. Selected and Edited by W. T. DOBSON.

The Cupboard Papers. By FIN-BEC.

Original Plays by W. S. GILBERT. FIRST SERIES. Containing: The Wicked World—Pygmalion and Galatea—Charity—The Princess—The Palace of Truth—Trial by Jury.

Original Plays by W. S. GILBERT. SECOND SERIES. Containing: Broken Hearts—Engaged—Sweethearts—Gretchen—Dan'l Druce—Tom Cobb—H.M.S. Pinafore—The Sorcerer—The Pirates of Penzance.

Songs of Irish Wit and Humour. Collected and Edited by A. PERCEVAL GRAVES.

Animals and their Masters. By Sir ARTHUR HELPS.

Social Pressure. By Sir A. HELPS.

Curiosities of Criticism. By HENRY J. JENNINGS.

The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table. By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES. Illustrated by J. GORDON THOMSON.

Pencil and Palette. By ROBERT KEMPT.

Little Essays: Sketches and Characters. By CHAS. LAMB. Selected from his Letters by PERCY FITZGERALD.

Clerical Anecdotes. By JACOB LARWOOD.

Forensic Anecdotes; or, Humour and Curiosities of the Law and Men of Law. By JACOB LARWOOD.

Theatrical Anecdotes. By JACOB LARWOOD.

Carols of Cockayne. By HENRY S. LEIGH.

Jeux d'Esprit. Edited by HENRY S. LEIGH.

True History of Joshua Davidson. By E. LYNN LINTON.

Witch Stories. By E. LYNN LINTON.

Ourselves: Essays on Women. By E. LYNN LINTON.

Pastimes and Players. By ROBERT MACGREGOR.

The New Paul and Virginia. By W. H. MALLOCK.

The New Republic. By W. H. MALLOCK.

Puck on Pegasus. By H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL.

MAYFAIR LIBRARY, *continued*—

Pegasus Re-Saddled. By H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL. Illustrated by GEORGE DU MAURIER.

Muses of Mayfair. Edited by H. CHOLMONDELEY-PENNELL.

Thoreau: His Life and Aims. By H. A. PAGE.

Puniana. By the Hon. HUGH ROWLEY.

More Puniana. By the Hon. HUGH ROWLEY.

The Philosophy of Handwriting. By DON FELIX DE SALAMANCA.

By Stream and Sea. By WILLIAM SENIOR.

Old Stories Re-told. By WALTER THORNBURY.

Leaves from a Naturalist's Notebook. By Dr. ANDREW WILSON.

Medicine, Family.—One Thousand Medical Maxims and Surgical Hints, for Infancy, Adult Life, Middle Age, and Old Age. By N. E. DAVIES, L.R.C.P. Lond. Cr. 8vo, 1s.; cl., 1s. 6d.

Merry Circle (The): A Book of New Intellectual Games and Amusements. By CLARA BELLEW. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

Mexican Mustang (On a). Through Texas, from the Gulf to the Rio Grande. A New Book of American Humour. By ALEX. E. SWEET and J. ARMOY KNOX, Editors of "Texas Siftings." 400 Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Middlemass (Jean), Novels by: Touch and Go. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s. Mr. Dorillion. Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

Miller.—Physiology for the Young; or, The House of Life: Human Physiology, with its application to the Preservation of Health. For use in Classes and Popular Reading. With numerous Illustrations. By Mrs. F. FENWICK MILLER. Small 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

Milton (J. L.), Works by:

The Hygiene of the Skin. A Concise Set of Rules for the Management of the Skin; with Directions for Diet, Wines, Soaps, Baths, &c. Small 8vo, 1s.; cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

The Bath in Diseases of the Skin. Small 8vo, 1s.; cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

The Laws of Life, and their Relation to Diseases of the Skin. Small 8vo, 1s.; cloth extra, 1s. 6d.

**Moncrieff. — The Abdication;** or, Time Tries All. An Historical Drama. By W. D. SCOTT-MONCRIEFF. With Seven Etchings by JOHN PETTIE, R.A., W. Q. ORCHARDSON, R.A., J. MACWHIRTER, A.R.A., COLIN HUNTER, R. MACBETH, and TOM GRAHAM. Large 4to, bound in buckram, 21s.

**Murray (D. Christie), Novels** by. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

A Life's Atonement.

A Model Father.

Joseph's Coat.

Coals of Fire.

By the Gate of the Sea.

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

Val Strange: A Story of the Primrose Way.

Hearts.

The Way of the World.

**North Italian Folk.** By Mrs. COMYNS CARR. Illust. by RANDOLPH CALDECOTT. Square 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Number Nip (Stories about),** the Spirit of the Giant Mountains. Retold for Children by WALTER GRAHAME. With Illustrations by J. MOYR SMITH. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Nursery Hints: A Mother's** Guide in Health and Disease. By N. E. DAVIES, L.R.C.P. Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Oliphant. — Whiteladies: A** Novel. With Illustrations by ARTHUR HOPKINS and HENRY WOODS. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**O'Connor. — Lord Beaconsfield** A Biography. By T. P. O'CONNOR, M.P. Sixth Edition, with a New Preface, bringing the book down to the Death of Lord Beaconsfield. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**O'Reilly. — Phœbe's Fortunes:** A Novel. With Illustrations by HENRY TUCK. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**O'Shaughnessy (Arth.), Works** by:

Songs of a Worker. Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Music and Moonlight. Fcap. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Lays of France. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

**Ouida, Novels by.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Held in Bondage.** A Dog of Flanders.

**Strathmore.** Pascarel.

**Chandos.** Signa.

**Under Two Flags.** In a Winter City.

**Cecil Castle-** Ariadne.

**maine's Gage.** Friendship.

**Idalia.** Moths.

**Tricotrin.** Pipistrello.

**Puck.** A Village Com-

**Folle Farine.** mune.

**Two Little Wooden** Bimbi.

**Shoes.** In Maremma.

**Wanda: A Novel.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Frescoes: Dramatic Sketches.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s. [*Shortly.*]

**Bimbi: PRESENTATION EDITION.** Sq. 8vo, cloth gilt, cinnamon edges, 7s. 6d.

**Princess Napraxine.** Three Vols., crown 8vo.

**Wisdom, Wit, and Pathos.** Selected from the Works of OUIDA by F. SYDNEY MORRIS. Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Page (H. A.), Works by:**

**Thoreau: His Life and Aims: A Study.** With a Portrait. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Lights on the Way: Some Tales with-** in a Tale. By the late J. H. ALEX-  
ANDER, B.A. Edited by H. A. PAGE.  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Pascal's Provincial Letters.** A New Translation, with Historical Introduction and Notes, by T. M'CRIE, D.D. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Patient's (The) Vade Mecum:** How to get most Benefit from Medical Advice. By WILLIAM KNIGHT, M.R.C.S., and EDWARD KNIGHT, L.R.C.P. Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Paul Ferroll:**

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Paul Ferroll: A Novel.**

**Why Paul Ferroll Killed his Wife.**

**Paul. — Gentle and Simple.** By MARGARET AGNES PAUL. With a Frontispiece by HELEN PATERSON. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.



**Payn (James), Novels by.**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Lost Sir Massingberd.

The Best of Husbands.

Walter's Word.

Halves. | Fallen Fortunes.

What He Cost Her.

Less Black than we're Painted.

By Proxy. | High Spirits.

Under One Roof. | Carlyon's Year.

A Confidential Agent.

Some Private Views.

A Grape from a Thorn.

For Cash Only. | From Exile.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

A Perfect Treasure.

Bentinck's Tutor.

Murphy's Master.

A County Family. | At Her Mercy.

A Woman's Vengeance.

Cecil's Tryst.

The Clyffards of Clyffe.

The Family Scapegrace

The Foster Brothers.

Found Dead.

Gwendoline's Harvest.

Humorous Stories.

Like Father, Like Son.

A Marine Residence.

Married Beneath Him.

Mirk Abbey.

Not Wooed, but Won.

Two Hundred Pounds Reward.

Kit: A Memory. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

The Canon's Ward. With Portrait of Author. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

In Peril and Privation: A Book for Boys. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

[In preparation.]

**Pennell (H. Cholmondeley),**  
Works by: Post 8vo, cloth limp,  
2s. 6d. each.

Puck on Pegasus. With Illustrations.

The Muses of Mayfair. Vers de Société, Selected and Edited by H. C. PENNELL.

Pegasus Re-Saddled. With Ten full-page Illusts. by G. DU MAURIER.

**Phelps.—Beyond the Gates.**

By ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS,  
Author of "The Gates Ajar." Crown  
8vo, cloth extra, 2s. 6d.

**Pirkis.—Trooping with Crows:**

A Story. By CATHERINE PIRKIS. Fcap.  
8vo, picture cover, 1s.

**Planche (J. R.), Works by:**

The Cyclopædia of Costume; or,  
A Dictionary of Dress—Regal, Ec-  
clesiastical, Civil, and Military—from  
the Earliest Period in England to the  
Reign of George the Third. Includ-  
ing Notices of Contemporaneous  
Fashions on the Continent, and a  
General History of the Costumes of  
the Principal Countries of Europe.  
Two Vols., demy 4to, half morocco,  
profusely illustrated with Coloured  
and Plain Plates and Woodcuts,  
£7 7s. The Vols. may also be had  
*separately* (each complete in itself)  
at £3 13s. 6d. each: Vol. I. THE  
DICTIONARY. Vol. II. A GENERAL  
HISTORY OF COSTUME IN EUROPE.

The Pursuivant of Arms; or, Her-  
aldry Founded upon Facts. With  
Coloured Frontispiece and 200 Illus-  
trations. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Songs and Poems, from 1819 to 1879.  
Edited, with an Introduction, by his  
Daughter, Mrs. MACKARNES. Crown  
8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Play-time: Sayings and Doings**  
of Baby-land. By EDWARD STANFORD.  
Large 4to, handsomely printed in  
Colours, 5s.

**Plutarch's Lives of Illustrious**

Men. Translated from the Greek,  
with Notes Critical and Historical, and  
a Life of Plutarch, by JOHN and  
WILLIAM LANGHORNE. Two Vols.,  
8vo, cloth extra, with Portraits, 10s. 6d.

**Poe (Edgar Allan):—**

The Choice Works, in Prose and  
Poetry, of EDGAR ALLAN POE. With  
an Introductory Essay by CHARLES  
BAUDELAIRE, Portrait and Fac-  
similes. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.

The Mystery of Marie Roget, and  
other Stories. Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Pope's Poetical Works.** Com-  
plete in One Vol. Post 8vo, cl. limp, 2s.

**Power.—Philistia: A Novel.** By  
CECIL POWER. Three Vols., crown  
8vo. [Shortly.]

**Price (E. C.), Novels by:**

Valentina: A Sketch. With a Fron-  
tispiece by HAL LUDLOW. Cr. 8vo,  
cl. ex., 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

The Foreigners. Crown 8vo, cloth  
extra, 3s. 6d.



**Proctor (Richd. A.), Works by :**

Flowers of the Sky. With 55 Illusts.  
Small crown 8vo, cloth extra, 4s. 6d.

Easy Star Lessons. With Star Maps  
for Every Night in the Year, Draw-  
ings of the Constellations, &c.  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Familiar Science Studies. Crown  
8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

Rough Ways made Smooth: A  
Series of Familiar Essays on Scien-  
tific Subjects. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Our Place among Infinities: A Series  
of Essays contrasting our Little  
Abode in Space and Time with the  
Infinities Around us. Crown 8vo,  
cloth extra, 6s.

The Expanse of Heaven: A Series  
of Essays on the Wonders of the  
Firmament. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Saturn and Its System. New and  
Revised Edition, with 13 Steel Plates.  
Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 10s. 6d.

The Great Pyramid: Observatory,  
Tomb, and Temple. With Illus-  
trations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

Mysteries of Time and Space. With  
Illusts. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

The Universe of Suns, and other  
Science Gleanings. With Illusts.  
Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. [*Shortly.*]

Wages and Wants of Science  
Workers. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d.

**Pyrotechnist's Treasury (The);**

or, Complete Art of Making Fireworks.  
By THOMAS KENTISH. With numerous  
Illustrations. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 4s. 6d.

**Rabelais' Works.**

Faithfully  
Translated from the French, with  
variorum Notes, and numerous charac-  
teristic Illustrations by GUSTAVE  
DORÉ. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Rambosson.—Popular Astro-**

nomy. By J. RAMBOSSON, Laureate  
of the Institute of France. Trans-  
lated by C. B. PITMAN. Crown 8vo,  
cloth gilt, with numerous Illustrations,  
and a beautifully executed Chart of  
Spectra, 7s. 6d.

**Reader's Handbook (The) of**

Allusions, References, Plots, and  
Stories. By the Rev. Dr. BREWER.  
Fourth Edition, revised throughout,  
with a New Appendix, containing a  
COMPLETE ENGLISH BIBLIOGRAPHY.  
Cr. 8vo, 1,400 pages, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Richardson.—A Ministry of**

Health, and other Papers. By BEN-  
JAMIN WARD RICHARDSON, M.D., &c.  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Reade (Charles, D.C.L.), Novels**

by. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.  
each; or crown 8vo, cloth extra, il-  
lustrated, 3s. 6d. each.

Peg Woffington. Illustrated by S. L.  
FILDES, A.R.A.

Christie Johnstone. Illustrated by  
WILLIAM SMALL.

It is Never Too Late to Mend. Il-  
lustrated by G. J. PINWELL.

The Course of True Love Never did  
run Smooth. Illustrated by HELEN  
PATERSON.

The Autobiography of a Thief; Jack  
of all Trades; and James Lambert.  
Illustrated by MATT STRETCH.

Love me Little, Love me Long. Il-  
lustrated by M. ELLEN EDWARDS.

The Double Marriage. Illust. by Sir  
JOHN GILBERT, R.A., and C. KEENE.

The Cloister and the Hearth. Il-  
lustrated by CHARLES KEENE.

Hard Cash. Illust. by F. W. LAWSON.

Griffith Gaunt. Illustrated by S. L.  
FILDES, A.R.A., and WM. SMALL.

Foul Play. Illust. by DU MAURIER.

Put Yourself in His Place. Illus-  
trated by ROBERT BARNES.

A Terrible Temptation. Illustrated  
by EDW. HUGHES and A. W. COOPER.

The Wandering Heir. Illustrated  
by HELEN PATERSON, S. L. FILDES,  
A.R.A., CHARLES GREEN, and HENRY  
WOODS, A.R.A.

A Simpleton. Illustrated by KATE  
CRAUFORD.

A Woman-Hater. Illustrated by  
THOS. COULDERY.

Readiana. With a Steel-plate Portrait  
of CHARLES READE.

Singleheart and Doubleface: A  
Matter-of-fact Romance.

Good Stories of Men and other  
Animals.

The Jilt, and other Stories.

**Riddell (Mrs. J. H.), Novels by :**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each;  
post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Her Mother's Darling.

The Prince of Wales's Garden Party.

**Rimmer (Alfred), Works by :**

Our Old Country Towns. With over  
50 Illusts. Sq. 8vo, cloth gilt, 10s. 6d.

Rambles Round Eton and Harrow.  
50 Illusts. Sq. 8vo, cloth gilt, 10s. 6d.

About England with Dickens. With  
58 Illustrations by ALFRED RIMMER  
and C. A. VANDERHOOF. Square 8vo,  
cloth gilt, 10s. 6d.

**Robinson (F. W.), Novels by :**

Women are Strange. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.  
The Hands of Justice. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Robinson (Phil), Works by :**

The Poets' Birds. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.  
The Poets' Beasts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. [*In preparation.*]

**Robinson Crusoe:** A beautiful reproduction of Major's Edition, with 37 Woodcuts and Two Steel Plates by GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, choicely printed. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. A few Large-Paper copies, printed on hand-made paper, with India proofs of the Illustrations, price 36s.

**Rochefoucauld's Maxims and Moral Reflections.** With Notes, and an Introductory Essay by SAINTE-BEUVE. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Roll of Battle Abbey, The ; or, A List of the Principal Warriors who came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror, and Settled in this Country, A.D. 1066-7.** With the principal Arms emblazoned in Gold and Colours. Handsomely printed, price 5s.

**Rowley (Hon. Hugh), Works by :**

Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d. each.  
Puniana: Riddles and Jokes. With numerous Illustrations.  
More Puniana. Profusely Illustrated.

**Russell (Clark).—Round the Galley-Fire.** By W. CLARK RUSSELL, Author of "The Wreck of the *Grosvenor*." Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Sala.—Gaslight and Daylight.** By GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Sanson.—Seven Generations of Executioners:** Memoirs of the Sanson Family (1688 to 1847). Edited by HENRY SANSON. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Saunders (John), Novels by :**  
Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

Bound to the Wheel.  
One Against the World.  
Guy Waterman.  
The Lion in the Path.  
The Two Dreamers.

**Saunders (Katharine), Novels by :**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.  
Joan Merryweather.  
Margaret and Elizabeth.  
Gldeon's Rock.  
The High Mills.

Heart Salvage, by Sea and Land.  
Three Vols., crown 8vo.

**Science Gossip: An Illustrated Medium of Interchange for Students and Lovers of Nature.** Edited by J. E. TAYLOR, F.L.S., &c. Devoted to Geology, Botany, Physiology, Chemistry, Zoology, Microscopy, Telescopy, Physiography, &c. Price 4d. Monthly; or 5s. per year, post free. Each Number contains a Coloured Plate and numerous Woodcuts. Vols. I. to XIV. may be had at 7s. 6d. each; and Vols. XV. to XIX. (1883), at 5s. each. Cases for Binding, 1s. 6d. each.

**Scott's (Sir Walter) Marmion.**

An entirely New Edition of this famous and popular Poem, with over 100 new Illustrations by leading Artists. Elegantly and appropriately bound, small 4to, cloth extra, 16s.

[The immediate success of "The Lady of the Lake," published in 1882, has encouraged Messrs. CHATTO and WINDUS to bring out a Companion Edition of this not less popular and famous poem. Produced in the same style, and with the same careful and elaborate style of illustration, regardless of cost, Mr. Anthony's skilful supervision is sufficient guarantee that the work is elegant and tasteful as well as correct.]

**"Secret Out" Series, The :**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, profusely Illustrated, 4s. 6d. each.

**The Secret Out: One Thousand Tricks with Cards, and other Recreations; with Entertaining Experiments in Drawing-room or "White Magic."** By W. H. CREMER. 300 Engravings.

**The Pyrotechnist's Treasury; or, Complete Art of Making Fire-works.** By THOMAS KENTISH. With numerous Illustrations.

**The Art of Amusing: A Collection of Graceful Arts, Games, Tricks, Puzzles, and Charades.** By FRANK BELEW. With 300 Illustrations.

**Hanky-Panky: Very Easy Tricks, Very Difficult Tricks, White Magic, Sleight of Hand.** Edited by A. H. CREMER. With 200 Illustrations.

**"SECRET OUT" SERIES, continued—**

**The Merry Circle: A Book of New Intellectual Games and Amusements.** By CLARA BELLEW. With many Illustrations.

**Magician's Own Book: Performances with Cups and Balls, Eggs, Hats, Handkerchiefs, &c.** All from actual Experience. Edited by W. H. CREMER. 200 Illustrations.

**Magic No Mystery: Tricks with Cards, Dice, Balls, &c.,** with fully descriptive Directions; the Art of Secret Writing; Training of Performing Animals, &c. With Coloured Frontispiece and many Illustrations.

**Senior (William), Works by :**

**Travel and Trout in the Antipodes.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**By Stream and Sea.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Seven Sagas (The) of Prehistoric Man.** By JAMES H. STODDART, Author of "The Village Life." Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Shakespeare :**

**The First Folio Shakespeare.—MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies.** Published according to the true Originall Copies. London, Printed by ISAAC IAGGARD and ED. BLOUNT. 1623.—A Reproduction of the extremely rare original, in reduced facsimile, by a photographic process—ensuring the strictest accuracy in every detail. Small 8vo, half-Roxburghe, 7s. 6d.

**The Lansdowne Shakespeare.** Beautifully printed in red and black, in small but very clear type. With engraved facsimile of DROESHOUT'S Portrait. Post 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Shakespeare for Children: Tales from Shakespeare.** By CHARLES and MARY LAMB. With numerous Illustrations, coloured and plain, by J. MOYR SMITH. Crown 4to, cloth gilt, 6s.

**The Handbook of Shakespeare Music.** Being an Account of 350 Pieces of Music, set to Words taken from the Plays and Poems of Shakespeare, the compositions ranging from the Elizabethan Age to the Present Time. By ALFRED ROFFE. 4to, half-Roxburghe, 7s.

**A Study of Shakespeare.** By ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 8s.

**Shelley's Complete Works, in** Four Vols., post 8vo, cloth limp, 8s.; or separately, 2s. each. Vol. I. contains his Early Poems, Queen Mab, &c., with an Introduction by LEIGH HUNT; Vol. II., his Later Poems, Laon and Cythna, &c.; Vol. III., Posthumous Poems, the Shelley Papers, &c.; Vol. IV., his Prose Works, including A Refutation of Deism, Zastrozzi, St. Irvyne, &c.

**Sheridan:—**

**Sheridan's Complete Works, with Life and Anecdotes.** Including his Dramatic Writings, printed from the Original Editions, his Works in Prose and Poetry, Translations, Speeches, Jokes, Puns, &c. With a Collection of Sheridaniana. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, with 10 full-page Tinted Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

**Sheridan's Comedies: The Rivals, and The School for Scandal.** Edited, with an Introduction and Notes to each Play, and a Biographical Sketch of Sheridan, by BRANDER MATTHEWS. With Decorative Vignettes and 10 full-page Illustrations. Demy 8vo, cl. bds., 12s. 6d.

**Short Sayings of Great Men.**

With Historical and Explanatory Notes by SAMUEL A. BENT, M.A. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Sidney's (Sir Philip) Complete**

**Poetical Works, including all those in "Arcadia."** With Portrait, Memorial-Introduction, Essay on the Poetry of Sidney, and Notes, by the Rev. A. B. GROSART, D.D. Three Vols., crown 8vo, cloth boards, 18s.

**Signboards: Their History.**

With Anecdotes of Famous Taverns and Remarkable Characters. By JACOB LARWOOD and JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with 100 Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

**Sims (G. R.)—How the Poor Live.** With 60 Illustrations by FRED. BARNARD. Large 4to, 1s.

**Sketchley.—A Match in the Dark.** By ARTHUR SKETCHLEY. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Slang Dictionary, The: Etymological, Historical, and Anecdotal.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt, 6s. 6d.

**Smith (J. Moyr), Works by :**

**The Prince of Argolis: A Story of the Old Greek Fairy Time.** By J. MOYR SMITH. Small 8vo, cloth extra, with 130 Illustrations, 3s. 6d.

SMITH'S (J. MOYR) WORKS, *continued*—

**Tales of Old Thule.** Collected and Illustrated by J. MOYR SMITH. Cr. 8vo, cloth gilt, profusely Illust., 6s.

**The Wooling of the Water Witch: A Northern Oddity.** By EVAN DALBORNE. Illustrated by J. MOYR SMITH. Small 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Spalding.—Elizabethan Demonology:** An Essay in Illustration of the Belief in the Existence of Devils, and the Powers possessed by Them. By T. ALFRED SPALDING, LL.B. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Speight. — The Mysteries of Heron Dyke.** By T. W. SPEIGHT. With a Frontispiece by M. ELLEN EDWARDS. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Spenser for Children.** By M. H. TOWRY. With Illustrations by WALTER J. MORGAN. Crown 4to, with Coloured Illustrations, cloth gilt, 6s.

**Staunton.—Laws and Practice of Chess;** Together with an Analysis of the Openings, and a Treatise on End Games. By HOWARD STAUNTON. Edited by ROBERT B. WORMALD. New Edition, small cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 5s.

**Sterndale.—The Afghan Knife:** A Novel. By ROBERT ARMITAGE STERNDAL. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Stevenson (R. Louis), Works by:**

**Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes.** Frontispiece by WALTER CRANE. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**An Inland Voyage.** With Front. by W. CRANE. Post 8vo, cl. lp., 2s. 6d.

**Virginibus Puerisque, and other Papers.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Familiar Studies of Men and Books.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**New Arabian Nights.** Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 6s.; post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**The Silverado Squatters.** With Frontispiece. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**St. John.—A Levantine Family.**

By BAYLE ST. JOHN. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Stoddard.—Summer Cruising**

in the South Seas. By CHARLES WARREN STODDARD. Illust. by WALLIS MACKAY. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 3s. 6d.

**St. Pierre.—Paul and Virginia,**

and The Indian Cottage. By BERNARDIN DE ST. PIERRE. Edited, with Life, by the Rev. E. CLARKE. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Stories from Foreign Novelists.** With Notices of their Lives and Writings. By HELEN and ALICE ZIMMERN; and a Frontispiece. Crown 8vo cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Strutt's Sports and Pastimes**

of the People of England; including the Rural and Domestic Recreations, May Games, Mummeries, Shows, Processions, Pageants, and Pompous Spectacles, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time. With 140 Illustrations. Edited by WILLIAM HONE. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Suburban Homes (The) of**

London: A Residential Guide to Favourite London Localities, their Society, Celebrities, and Associations. With Notes on their Rental, Rates, and House Accommodation. With Map of Suburban London. Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.

**Swift's Choice Works, in Prose**

and Verse. With Memoir, Portrait, and Facsimiles of the Maps in the Original Edition of "Gulliver's Travels." Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Swinburne (Algernon C.),**

**Works by:**

**The Queen Mother and Rosamond.**

Fcap. 8vo, 5s.

**Atalanta in Calydon.** Crown 8vo, 6s.

**Chastelard.** A Tragedy. Cr. 8vo, 7s.

**Poems and Ballads. FIRST SERIES.**

Fcap. 8vo, 9s. Also in crown 8vo, at same price.

**Poems and Ballads. SECOND SERIES.**

Fcap. 8vo, 9s. Also in crown 8vo, at same price.

**Notes on Poems and Reviews.** 8vo, 1s.

**William Blake: A Critical Essay.**

With Facsimile Paintings. Demy 8vo, 16s.

**Songs before Sunrise.** Cr. 8vo, 10s. 6d.

**Bothwell: A Tragedy.** Crown 8vo, 12s. 6d.

**George Chapman: An Essay.** Crown 8vo, 7s.

**Songs of Two Nations.** Cr. 8vo, 6s.

**Essays and Studies.** Crown 8vo, 12s.

**Erechtheus: A Tragedy.** Cr. 8vo, 6s.

**Note of an English Republican on the Muscovite Crusade.** 8vo, 1s.

**A Note on Charlotte Bronte.** Crown 8vo, 6s.

**A Study of Shakespeare.** Cr. 8vo, 8s.

**Songs of the Springtides.** Crown 8vo, 6s.

**Studies in Song.** Crown 8vo, 7s.

**Mary Stuart: A Tragedy.** Cr. 8vo, 8s.

**Tristram of Lyonesse, and other Poems.** Crown 8vo, 9s.

**A Century of Roundels.** Small 4to, cloth extra, 8s.



**Symonds.—Wine, Women and Song:** Mediæval Latin Students' Songs. Now first translated into English Verse, with an Essay by J. ADDINGTON SYMONDS. Small 8vo, parchment, 6s. A few LARGE PAPER COPIES, carefully printed on hand-made paper, price 21s. *[Preparing.]*

**Syntax's (Dr.) Three Tours:** In Search of the Picturesque, in Search of Consolation, and in Search of a Wife. With the whole of ROWLANDSON'S droll page Illustrations in Colours and a Life of the Author by J. C. HOTTEN. Medium 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.

**Taine's History of English Literature.** Translated by HENRY VAN LAUN. Four Vols., small 8vo, cloth boards, 30s.—POPULAR EDITION, Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 15s.

**Taylor (Dr. J. E., F.L.S.), Works by:**

**The Sagacity and Morality of Plants:** A Sketch of the Life and Conduct of the Vegetable Kingdom. With Coloured Frontispiece and 100 Illusts. Crown 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.

**Our Common British Fossils:** A Complete Handbook. With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d. *[Preparing.]*

**Taylor's (Bayard) Diversions of the Echo Club:** Burlesques of Modern Writers. Post 8vo, cl. limp, 2s.

**Taylor's (Tom) Historical Dramas:** "Clancarty," "Jeanne Darc," "Twist Axe and Crown," "The Fool's Revenge," "Arkwright's Wife," "Anne Boleyn," "Plot and Passion." One Vol., crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

\* \* The Plays may also be had separately, at 1s. each.

**Tennyson (Lord):** A Biographical Sketch. By H. J. JENNINGS. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

**Thackerayana:** Notes and Anecdotes. Illustrated by Hundreds of Sketches by WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY, depicting Humorous Incidents in his School-life, and Favourite Characters in the books of his every-day reading. With Coloured Frontispiece. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.

**Thomas (Bertha), Novels by.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.  
**Cressida.**  
**Proud Maisie.**  
**The Violin-Player.**

**Thomas (M.).—A Fight for Life:** A Novel. By W. MOY THOMAS. Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Thomson's Seasons and Castle of Indolence.** With a Biographical and Critical Introduction by ALLAN CUNNINGHAM, and over 50 fine Illustrations on Steel and Wood. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, gilt edges, 7s. 6d.

**Thornbury (Walter), Works by**  
**Haunted London.** Edited by EDWARD WALFORD, M.A. With Illustrations by F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**The Life and Correspondence of J. M. W. Turner.** Founded upon Letters and Papers furnished by his Friends and fellow Academicians. With numerous Illusts. in Colours, facsimiled from Turner's Original Drawings. Cr. 8vo, cl. extra, 7s. 6d.  
**Old Stories Re-told.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Tales for the Marines.** Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Timbs (John), Works by:**

**The History of Clubs and Club Life in London.** With Anecdotes of its Famous Coffee-houses, Hostleries, and Taverns. With numerous Illustrations. Cr. 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**English Eccentrics and Eccentricities:** Stories of Wealth and Fashion, Delusions, Impostures, and Fanatic Missions, Strange Sights and Sporting Scenes, Eccentric Artists, Theatrical Folks, Men of Letters, &c. With nearly 50 Illusts. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Torrens. — The Marquess Wellesley,** Architect of Empire. An Historic Portrait. By W. M. TORRENS, M.P. Demy 8vo, cloth extra, 14s.

**Trollope (Anthony), Novels by:** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**The Way We Live Now.**  
**The American Senator.**  
**Kept in the Dark.**  
**Frau Frohmann.**  
**Marion Fay.**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.  
**Mr. Scarborough's Family.**  
**The Land-Leaguers.**

**Trollope (Frances E.), Novels by**  
**Like Ships upon the Sea.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Mabel's Progress.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Anne Furness.** Cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 3s. 6d.



**Trollope (T. A.).—Diamond Cut Diamond, and other Stories.** By THOMAS ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s.

**Tytler (Sarah), Novels by:**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each; post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

*What She Came Through.*

*The Bride's Pass.*

*Saint Mungo's City.* Three Vols., crown 8vo.

*Beauty and the Beast.* Three Vols., crown 8vo. [*Shortly.*]

**Tytler (C. C. Fraser-).—Mistress Judith: A Novel.** By C. C. FRASER-TYTLER. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d.

**Van Laun.—History of French Literature.** By HENRY VAN LAUN. Complete in Three Vols., demy 8vo, cloth boards, 7s. 6d. each.

**Villari.—A Double Bond: A Story.** By LINDA VILLARI. Fcap. 8vo, picture cover, 1s.

**Walcott.—Church Work and Life in English Minsters; and the English Student's Monasticon.** By the Rev. MACKENZIE E. C. WALCOTT, B.D. Two Vols., crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Map and Ground-Plans, 14s.

**Walford (Edw., M.A.), Works by:**

*The County Families of the United Kingdom.* Containing Notices of the Descent, Birth, Marriage, Education, &c., of more than 12,000 distinguished Heads of Families, their Heirs Apparent or Presumptive, the Offices they hold or have held, their Town and Country Addresses, Clubs, &c. Twenty-fourth Annual Edition, for 1884, cloth, full gilt, 50s.

*The Shilling Peerage (1884).* Containing an Alphabetical List of the House of Lords, Dates of Creation, Lists of Scotch and Irish Peers, Addresses, &c. 32mo, cloth, 1s. Published annually.

*The Shilling Baronetage (1884).* Containing an Alphabetical List of the Baronets of the United Kingdom, short Biographical Notices, Dates of Creation, Addresses, &c. 32mo, cloth, 1s. Published annually.

*The Shilling Knightage (1884).* Containing an Alphabetical List of the Knights of the United Kingdom, short Biographical Notices, Dates of Creation, Addresses, &c. 32mo, cloth, 1s. Published annually.

**WALFORD'S (EDW., M.A.) WORKS, con.—**

*The Shilling House of Commons (1884).* Containing a List of all the Members of the British Parliament, their Town and Country Addresses, &c. 32mo, cloth, 1s. Published annually.

*The Complete Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, and House of Commons (1884).* In One Volume, royal 32mo, cloth extra, gilt edges, 5s. Published annually.

*Haunted London.* By WALTER THORNBURY. Edited by EDWARD WALFORD, M.A. With Illustrations by F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**Walton and Cotton's Complete Angler; or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation; being a Discourse of Rivers, Fishponds, Fish and Fishing, written by IZAAK WALTON; and Instructions how to Angle for a Trout or Grayling in a clear Stream, by CHARLES COTTON. With Original Memoirs and Notes by Sir HARRIS NICOLAS, and 61 Copperplate Illustrations.** Large crown 8vo, cloth antique, 7s. 6d.

**Wanderer's Library, The:**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

*Wanderings in Patagonia; or, Life among the Ostrich Hunters.* By JULIUS BEERBOHM. Illustrated.

*Camp Notes: Stories of Sport and Adventure in Asia, Africa, and America.* By FREDERICK BOYLE.

*Savage Life.* By FREDERICK BOYLE.

*Merrie England in the Olden Time.* By GEORGE DANIEL. With Illustrations by ROBT. CRUIKSHANK.

*Circus Life and Circus Celebrities.* By THOMAS FROST.

*The Lives of the Conjurers.* By THOMAS FROST.

*The Old Showmen and the Old London Fairs.* By THOMAS FROST.

*Low-Life Deeps.* An Account of the Strange Fish to be found there. By JAMES GREENWOOD.

*The Wilds of London.* By JAMES GREENWOOD.

*Tunis: The Land and the People.* By the Chevalier de HESSE-WARTEGG. With 22 Illustrations.

*The Life and Adventures of a Cheap Jack.* By One of the Fraternity. Edited by CHARLES HINDLEY.

*The World Behind the Scenes.* By PERCY FITZGERALD.

*Tavern Anecdotes and Sayings: Including the Origin of Signs, and Reminiscences connected with Taverns, Coffee Houses, Clubs, &c.* By CHARLES HINDLEY. With Illusts.

**WANDERER'S LIBRARY, THE, continued—**  
**The Genial Showman: Life and Adventures of Artemus Ward.** By E. P. HINGSTON. With a Frontispiece.

**The Story of the London Parks.** By JACOB LARWOOD. With Illustrations.

**London Characters.** By HENRY MAYHEW. Illustrated.

**Seven Generations of Executioners: Memoirs of the Sanson Family (1688 to 1847).** Edited by HENRY SANSON.

**Summer Cruising in the South Seas.** By CHARLES WARREN STODDARD. Illustrated by WALLIS MACKAY.

**Warner.—A Roundabout Journey.** By CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER, Author of "My Summer in a Garden." Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s.

#### Warrants, &c. :—

**Warrant to Execute Charles I.** An exact Facsimile, with the Fifty-nine Signatures, and corresponding Seals. Carefully printed on paper to imitate the Original, 22 in. by 14 in. Price 2s.

**Warrant to Execute Mary Queen of Scots.** An exact Facsimile, including the Signature of Queen Elizabeth, and a Facsimile of the Great Seal. Beautifully printed on paper to imitate the Original MS. Price 2s.

**Magna Charta.** An exact Facsimile of the Original Document in the British Museum, printed on fine plate paper, nearly 3 feet long by 2 feet wide, with the Arms and Seals emblazoned in Gold and Colours. Price 5s.

**The Roll of Battle Abbey; or, A List of the Principal Warriors who came over from Normandy with William the Conqueror, and Settled in this Country, A.D. 1066-7.** With the principal Arms emblazoned in Gold and Colours. Price 5s.

**Weather, How to Foretell the,** with the Pocket Spectroscope. By F. W. CORY, M.R.C.S. Eng., F.R.Met. Soc., &c. With 10 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 1s.; cloth, 1s. 6d.

**Westropp.—Handbook of Pottery and Porcelain; or, History of those Arts from the Earliest Period.** By HODDER M. WESTROPP. With numerous Illustrations, and a List of Marks. Crown 8vo, cloth limp, 4s. 6d.

**Whistler v. Ruskin: Art and Art Critics.** By J. A. MACNEILL WHISTLER. Seventh Edition, square 8vo, 1s.

**White's Natural History of Selborne.** Edited, with Additions, by THOMAS BROWN, F.L.S. Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s.

**Williams (W. Mattieu, F.R.A.S.),** Works by:

**Science Notes.** See the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE. 1s. Monthly.

**Science in Short Chapters.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**A Simple Treatise on Heat.** Crown 8vo, cloth limp, with Illusts., 2s. 6d.

**The Chemistry of Cookery.** Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 6s. [*In the press.*]

**Wilson (Dr. Andrew, F.R.S.E.),** Works by:

**Chapters on Evolution: A Popular History of the Darwinian and Allied Theories of Development.** Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with 259 Illustrations, 7s. 6d.

**Leaves from a Naturalist's Notebook.** Post 8vo, cloth limp, 2s. 6d.

**Leisure-Time Studies, chiefly Biological.** Third Edition, with a New Preface. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, with Illustrations, 6s.

**Winter (J. S.), Stories by:**

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.  
 post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Cavalry Life. | Regimental Legends.**

**Wood.—Sabina: A Novel.** By Lady Wood. Post 8vo, illust. bds., 2s.

**Words, Facts, and Phrases:**

A Dictionary of Curious, Quaint, and Out-of-the-Way Matters. By ELIEZER EDWARDS. New and cheaper issue, cr. 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.; half-bound, 9s.

**Wright (Thomas), Works by:**

**Caricature History of the Georges.** (The House of Hanover.) With 400 Pictures, Caricatures, Squibs, Broad-sides, Window Pictures, &c. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 7s. 6d.

**History of Caricature and of the Grotesque in Art, Literature, Sculpture, and Painting.** Profusely Illustrated by F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A. Large post 8vo, cl. ex., 7s. 6d.

**Yates (Edmund), Novels by:**

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

**Castaway. | The Forlorn Hope. Land at Last.**

## NOVELS BY THE BEST AUTHORS.

*Now in the press.***WILKIE COLLINS'S NEW NOVEL.****"I Say No."** By WILKIE COLLINS. Three Vols., crown 8vo.**Mrs. CASHEL HOEY'S NEW NOVEL****The Lover's Creed.** By Mrs. CASHEL HOEY, Author of "The Blossoming of an Aloe," &c. With 12 Illustrations by P. MACNAB. Three Vols., crown 8vo.**SARAH TYTLER'S NEW NOVEL.****Beauty and the Beast.** By SARAH TYTLER, Author of "The Bride's Pass," "Saint Mungo's City," "Citoyenne Jacqueline," &c. Three Vols., cr. 8vo.**CHARLES GIBBON'S NEW NOVEL.****By Mead and Stream.** By CHARLES GIBBON, Author of "Robin Gray," "The Golden Shaft," "Queen of the Meadow," &c. Three Vols., cr. 8vo.**ROBT. BUCHANAN'S NEW NOVEL.****Foxglove Manor.** By ROBT. BUCHANAN, Author of "The Shadow of the Sword," "God and the Man," &c. Three Vols., crown 8vo.**BASIL'S NEW NOVEL.****"The Wearing of the Green."** By BASIL, Author of "Love the Debt," "A Drawn Game," &c. Three Vols., crown 8vo.**JULIAN HAWTHORNE'S NEW STORIES.****Mercy Holland, and other Stories.** By J. HAWTHORNE, Author of "Garth," "Beatrice Randolph," &c. Three Vols., crown 8vo.**NEW NOVEL BY CECIL POWER.****Philistia.** By CECIL POWER. Three Vols., crown 8vo.

## THE PICCADILLY NOVELS.

Popular Stories by the Best Authors. LIBRARY EDITIONS, many Illustrated, crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. each.

**BY MRS. ALEXANDER.****Maid, Wife, or Widow?****BY W. BESANT & JAMES RICE.****Ready-Money Mortiboy.****My Little Girl.****The Case of Mr. Lucraft.****This Son of Vulcan.****With Harp and Crown.****The Golden Butterfly.****By Celia's Arbour.****The Monks of Thelema.****'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay.****The Seamy Side.****The Ten Years' Tenant.****The Chaplain of the Fleet.****BY WALTER BESANT.****All Sorts and Conditions of Men.****The Captains' Room.****All in a Garden Fair.****BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.****A Child of Nature.****God and the Man.****The Shadow of the Sword.****The Martyrdom of Madeline.****Love Me for Ever.****Annan Water.****The New Abelard.****BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON.****Decelvers Ever.****Juliet's Guardian.****BY MORTIMER COLLINS.****Sweet Anne Page.****Transmigration.****From Midnight to Midnight.****MORTIMER & FRANCES COLLINS.****Blacksmith and Scholar.****The Village Comedy.****You Play me False.****BY WILKIE COLLINS.****Antonina.****Basil.****Hide and Seek.****The Dead Secret.****Queen of Hearts.****My Miscellanies.****Woman in White.****The Moonstone.****Man and Wife.****Poor Miss Finch.****Miss or Mrs.?****New Magdalen.****The Frozen Deep.****The Law and the Lady.****The Two Destinies.****Haunted Hotel.****The Fallen Leaves.****Jezebel's Daughter.****The Black Robe.****Heart and Science.****BY DUTTON COOK.****Paul Foster's Daughter.****BY WILLIAM CYPLES.****Hearts of Gold.****BY ALPHONSE DAUDET.****Port Salvation.****BY JAMES DE MILLE.****A Castle in Spain.****BY J. LEITH DERWENT.**  
**Our Lady of Tears. | Circe's Lovers.**

PICCADILLY NOVELS, *continued*—

BY M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

Felicia. | Kitty.

BY MRS. ANNIE EDWARDES.

Archie Lovell.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

Olympia. | One by One.  
Queen Cophetua. | A Real Queen.*Prefaced by Sir BARTLE FRERE.*  
Pandurang Harl.

BY EDWARD GARRETT.

The Capel Girls.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

Robin Gray.

For Lack of Gold.

In Love and War.

What will the World Say?

For the King.

In Honour Bound.

Queen of the Meadow.

In Pastures Green.

The Flower of the Forest.

A Heart's Problem.

The Braes of Yarrow.

The Golden Shaft.

Of High Degree.

Fancy Free.

Loving a Dream.

BY THOMAS HARDY.

Under the Greenwood Tree.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.

Garth.

Ellice Quentin.

Sebastian Strome.

Prince Saroni's Wife.

Dust.

| Fortune's Fool.

Beatrix Randolph.

BY SIR A. HELPS.

Ivan de Biron.

BY MRS. ALFRED HUNT.

Thornicroft's Model.

The Leaden Casket.

Self-Condemned.

BY JEAN INGELow.

Fated to be Free.

BY HARRIETT JAY.

The Queen of Connaught.

The Dark Colleen.

BY HENRY KINGSLEY.

Number Seventeen.

Oakshott Castle.

PICCADILLY NOVELS, *continued*—

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

Patricia Kemball.

Atonement of Leam Dundas.

The World Well Lost.

Under which Lord?

With a Silken Thread.

The Rebel of the Family

"My Love!" | Ione.

BY HENRY W. LUCY.

Gideon Fleyce.

BY JUSTIN McCARTHY, M.P.

The Waterdale Neighbours.

My Enemy's Daughter.

Linley Rochford. | A Fair Saxon.

Dear Lady Disdain.

Miss Misanthrope.

Donna Quixote.

The Comet of a Season.

Maid of Athens.

BY GEORGE MAC DONALD, LL.D.

Paul Faber, Surgeon.

Thomas Wingfold, Curate.

BY MRS. MACDONELL.

Quaker Cousins.

BY KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

Lost Rose. | The Evil Eye.

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Open! Sesame! | Written in Fire.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

Touch and Go.

BY D. CHRISTIE MURRAY.

Life's Atonement. | Coals of Fire.

Joseph's Coat. | Val Strange.

A Model Father. | Hearts.

By the Gate of the Sea.

The Way of the World.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

Whiteladies.

BY MARGARET A. PAUL.

Gentle and Simple.

BY JAMES PAYN.

Lost Sir Massingberd. | Under One Roof.

Best of Husbands | Carlyon's Year.  
Fallen Fortunes. | A Confidential Agent.

Halves. | From Exile.

Walter's Word. | A Grape from a Thorn.

What He Cost Her | For Cash Only.

Less Black than | Kit: A Memory.

We're Painted. | The Canon's

By Proxy. | Ward.

High Spirits.



PICCADILLY NOVELS, *continued*—

BY E. C. PRICE.

Valentina. | The Foreigners.

BY CHARLES READE, D.C.L.

It Is Never Too Late to Mend.

Hard Cash. | Peg Woffington.

Christie Johnstone.

Griffith Gaunt.

The Double Marriage.

Love Me Little, Love Me Long.

Foul Play.

The Cloister and the Hearth.

The Course of True Love.

The Autobiography of a Thief.

Put Yourself in His Place.

A Terrible Temptation.

The Wandering Heir. | A Simpleton.

A Woman-Hater. | Readiana.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

Her Mother's Darling.

Prince of Wales's Garden-Party.

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

Women are Strange.

The Hands of Justice.

BY JOHN SAUNDERS.

Bound to the Wheel.

Guy Waterman.

One Against the World.

The Lion in the Path.

The Two Dreamers.

BY KATHARINE SAUNDERS.

Joan Merryweather.

Margaret and Elizabeth.

Gideon's Rock. | The High Mills.

PICCADILLY NOVELS, *continued*—

BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

The Mysteries of Heron Dyke.

BY R. A. STERNDALÉ.

The Afghan Knife.

BY BERTHA THOMAS.

Proud Maisie. | Cressida.

The Violin-Player.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

The Way we Live Now.

The American Senator.

Frau Frohmann.

Marion Fay.

Kept in the Dark.

Mr. Scarborough's Family.

The Land-Leaguers.

BY FRANCES E. TROLLOPE.

Like Ships upon the Sea.

Anne Furness.

Mabel's Progress.

BY T. A. TROLLOPE.

Diamond Cut Diamond.

By IVAN TURGENIEFF and Others.

Stories from Foreign Novelists.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

What She Came Through.

The Bride's Pass.

BY C. C. FRASER-TYTLER.

Mistress Judith.

BY J. S. WINTER.

Cavalry Life.

Regimental Legends.

## CHEAP EDITIONS OF POPULAR NOVELS.

Post 8vo, illustrated boards, 2s. each.

BY EDMOND ABOUT.

The Fellah.

BY HAMILTON AÏDÉ.

Carr of Carrlyon. | Confidences.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER.

Mald, Wife, or Widow?

BY SHELSLEY BEAUCHAMP.

Grantley Grange.

BY W. BESANT &amp; JAMES RICE.

Ready-Money Mortiboy.

With Harp and Crown.

This Son of Vulcan. | My Little Girl.

The Case of Mr. Lucraft.

The Golden Butterfly.

By Cella's Arbour.

BY BESANT AND RICE, *continued*—

The Monks of Thelema.

'Twas in Trafalgar's Bay.

The Seamy Side.

The Ten Years' Tenant.

The Chaplain of the Fleet.

BY WALTER BESANT.

All Sorts and Conditions of Men.

The Captains' Room.

BY FREDERICK BOYLE.

Camp Notes. | Savage Life.

BY BRET HARTE.

An Heiress of Red Dog.

The Luck of Roaring Camp.

Californian Stories.

Gabriel Conroy. | Filp.



CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

The Shadow of the Sword.  
 A Child of Nature.  
 God and the Man.  
 The Martyrdom of Madellne.  
 Love Me for Ever.

BY MRS. BURNETT.

Surly Tim.

BY MRS. LOVETT CAMERON.

Deceivers Ever. | Juliet's Guardian.

BY MACLAREN COBBAN.

The Cure of Souls.

BY C. ALLSTON COLLINS.

The Bar Sinister.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

Antonina.	Miss or Mrs. P
Basil.	The New Magda-
Hide and Seek.	len.
The Dead Secret.	The Frozen Deep.
Queen of Hearts.	Law and the Lady.
My Miscellanies.	The Two Destinies
Woman in White.	Haunted Hotel.
The Moonstone.	The Fallen Leaves.
Man and Wife.	Jezebel's Daughter
Poor Miss Finch.	The Black Robe.

BY MORTIMER COLLINS.

Sweet Anne Page.  
 Transmigration.  
 From Midnight to Midnight.  
 A Fight with Fortune.

MORTIMER &amp; FRANCES COLLINS.

Sweet and Twenty. | Frances.  
 Blacksmith and Scholar.  
 The Village Comedy.  
 You Play me False.

BY DUTTON COOK.

Leo. | Paul Foster's Daughter.

BY J. LEITH DERWENT.

Our Lady of Tears.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

Sketches by Boz.  
 The Pickwick Papers.  
 Oliver Twist.  
 Nicholas Nickleby.

BY MRS. ANNIE EDWARDES.

A Point of Honour. | Archie Lovell.

BY M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

Felicia. | Kitty.

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.

Roxy.

CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY PERCY FITZGERALD.

Bella Donna. | Never Forgotten.  
 The Second Mrs. Tillotson.  
 Polly.

Seventy-five Brooke Street.

The Lady of Brantome.

BY ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE.

Filthy Lucre.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

Olympia. | Queen Cophetua.

One by One.

Prefaced by Sir H. BARTLE FRERE.

Pandurang Hari.

BY HAIN FRISWELL.

One of Two.

BY EDWARD GARRETT.

The Capel Girls.

BY CHARLES GIBBON.

Robin Gray.	Queen of the Mea-
For Lack of Gold.	dow.
What will the	In Pastures Green
World Say?	The Flower of the
In Honour Bound.	Forest.
The Dead Heart.	A Heart's Problem
In Love and War.	The Braes of Yar-
For the King.	row.

BY WILLIAM GILBERT.

Dr. Austin's Guests.  
 The Wizard of the Mountain.  
 James Duke.

BY JAMES GREENWOOD.  
 Dick Temple.

BY ANDREW HALLIDAY.  
 Every-Day Papers.

BY LADY DUFFUS HARDY.  
 Paul Wynter's Sacrifice.

BY THOMAS HARDY.  
 Under the Greenwood Tree.

BY JULIAN HAWTHORNE.  
 Garth. | Sebastian Strong's  
 Ellice Quentin. | Dust.  
 Prince Saroni's Wife.

BY SIR ARTHUR HELPS.  
 Ivan de Biron.

BY TOM HOOD.  
 A Golden Heart.

BY MRS. GEORGE HOOPER.  
 The House of Raby.

BY VICTOR HUGO.  
 The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY MRS. ALFRED HUNT.

Thornicroft's Model.  
The Leaden Casket.  
Self-Condemned.

BY JEAN INGELow.

Fated to be Free.

BY HARRIETT JAY.

The Dark Colleen.  
The Queen of Connaught.

BY HENRY KINGSLEY.

Oakshott Castle. | Number Seventeen

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

Patricia Kemball.  
The Atonement of Leam Dundas.  
The World Well Lost.  
Under which Lord?  
With a Silken Thread.  
The Rebel of the Family.  
"My Love!"

BY HENRY W. LUCY.

Gldeon Fleyce.

BY JUSTIN McCARTHY, M.P.

Dear Lady Disdaln.  
The Waterdale Neighbours.  
My Enemy's Daughter.  
A Fair Saxon.  
Linley Rochford.  
Miss Misanthrope.  
Donna Quixote.  
The Comet of a Season.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD.

Paul Faber, Surgeon.  
Thomas Wingfold, Curate.

BY MRS. MACDONELL.

Quaker Cousins.

BY KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

The Evil Eye. | Lost Rose.

BY W. H. MALLOCK.

The New Republic.

BY FLORENCE MARRYAT.

Open! Sesame! | A Little Stepson.  
A Harvest of Wild | Fighting the Air.  
Oats. | Written in Fire.

BY J. MASTERMAN.

Half-a-dozen Daughters.

BY JEAN MIDDLEMASS.

Touch and Go. | Mr. Dorillion.

CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY D. CHRISTIE MURRAY.

A Life's Atonement.  
A Model Father.  
Joseph's Coat.  
Coals of Fire.  
By the Gate of the Sea.

BY MRS. OLIPHANT.

Whiteladies.

BY MRS. ROBERT O'REILLY.

Phœbe's Fortunes.

BY OUIDA.

Held in Bondage.	Two Little Wooden
Strathmore.	Shoes.
Chandos.	Signa.
Under Two Flags.	In a Winter City.
Idalia.	Ariadne.
Cecil Castle-	Friendship.
maine.	Moths.
Tricotrin.	Pipistrello.
Puck.	A Village Com-
Folle Farine.	mune.
A Dog of Flanders.	Bimbi.
Pascarel.	In Maremma.

BY MARGARET AGNES PAUL.

Gentle and Simple.

BY JAMES PAYN.

Lost Sir Massing-	Like Father, Like
berd.	Son.
A Perfect Treas-	A Marine Resi-
ure.	dence.
Bentinck's Tutor.	Married Beneath
Murphy's Master.	Hlm.
A County Family.	Mirk Abbey.
At Her Mercy.	Not Wooded, but
A Woman's Ven-	Won.
geance.	£200 Reward.
Cecil's Tryst.	Less Black than
Clyffards of Clyffe	We're Painted.
The Family Scape-	By Proxy.
grace.	Under One Roof.
Foster Brothers.	High Spirits.
Found Dead.	Carlyon's Year.
Best of Husbands	A Confidential
Walter's Word.	Agent.
Halves.	Some Private
Fallen Fortunes.	VIEWS.
What He Cost Her	From Exlle.
Humorous Stories	A Grape from a
Gwendoline's Har-	Thorn.
vest.	For Cash Only.

BY EDGAR A. POE.

The Mystery of Marie Roget.

CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY E. C. PRICE.

Valentina.

BY CHARLES READE.

It is Never Too Late to Mend.

Hard Cash.

Peg Woffington.

Christie Johnstone.

Griffith Gaunt.

Put Yourself in His Place.

The Double Marriage.

Love Me Little, Love Me Long.

Foul Play.

The Cloister and the Hearth.

The Course of True Love.

Autobiography of a Thief.

A Terrible Temptation.

The Wandering Heir.

A Simpleton.

A Woman-Hater.

Readiana.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

Her Mother's Darling.

Prince of Wales's Garden Party.

BY F. W. ROBINSON.

Women are Strange.

BY BAYLE ST. JOHN.

A Levantine Family.

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Gaslight and Daylight.

BY JOHN SAUNDERS.

Bound to the Wheel.

One Against the World.

Guy Waterman.

The Lion in the Path.

Two Dreamers.

BY ARTHUR SKETCHLEY.

A Match in the Dark.

BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

The Mysteries of Heron Dyke.

BY R. A. STERDALE.

The Afghan Knife.

BY R. LOUIS STEVENSON.

New Arabian Nights.

BY BERTHA THOMAS.

Cressida. | Proud Maisie.

The Violin-Player.

BY W. MOY THOMAS.

A Fight for Life.

CHEAP POPULAR NOVELS, *continued*—

BY WALTER THORNBURY.

Tales for the Marines.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

Diamond Cut Diamond.

BY ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

The Way We Live Now.

The American Senator.

Frau Frohmann.

Marion Fay.

Kept in the Dark.

By FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE

Like Ships upon the Sea.

BY MARK TWAIN.

Tom Sawyer.

An Idle Excursion.

A Pleasure Trip on the Continent  
of Europe.

A Tramp Abroad.

The Stolen White Elephant.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

What She Came Through.

The Bride's Pass.

BY J. S. WINTER.

Cavalry Life. | Regimental Legends

BY LADY WOOD.

Sabina.

BY EDMUND YATES.

Castaway. | The Forlorn Hope.

Land at Last.

ANONYMOUS.

Paul Ferroll.

Why Paul Ferroll Killed his Wife.

Fcap. 8vo, picture covers, 1s. each.

Jeff Briggs's Love Story. By BRET  
HARTE.The Twins of Table Mountain. By  
BRET HARTE.Mrs. Gainsborough's Diamonds. By  
JULIAN HAWTHORNE.Kathleen Mavourneen. By Author  
of "That Lass o' Lowrie's."Lindsay's Luck. By the Author of  
"That Lass o' Lowrie's."Pretty Polly Pemberton. By the  
Author of "That Lass o' Lowrie's."Trooping with Crows. By Mrs.  
PIRKIS.The Professor's Wife. By LEONARD  
GRAHAM.

A Double Bond. By LINDA VILLARI.

Esther's Glove. By R. E. FRANCILLON.

The Garden that Paid the Rent.  
By TOM JERROLD.

# "FLORILINE."

**FOR THE TEETH AND BREATH.** A few drops of the liquid "FLORILINE" sprinkled on a wet tooth-brush produce a pleasant lather, which thoroughly cleanses the teeth from all parasites or impurities, hardens the gums, prevents tartar, stops decay, gives to the teeth a peculiar pearly-whiteness, and a delightful fragrance to the Breath. It removes all unpleasant odour arising from decayed teeth or tobacco smoke. "The FRAGRANT FLORILINE," being composed in part of honey and sweet herbs, is delicious to the taste, and the greatest toilet discovery of the age. Sold everywhere, by Chemists and Perfumers, at 2s. 6d. per bottle.

## BROWN'S BRONCHIAL TROCHES

Public Speakers and Singers will find them beneficial in clearing the Voice before speaking or singing, and relieving the Throat after any unusual exertion of the vocal organs, having a peculiar adaptation to affections which disturb the organs of speech. Few are aware of the importance of checking a cough or "slight cold" in its first stages. That which in the beginning would yield to a mild remedy, if neglected soon attacks the lungs. "BROWN'S BRONCHIAL TROCHES" are a most valuable article when Coughs, Colds, Bronchitis, Influenza, Hoarseness, and Sore Throat are prevalent. The Troches give sure and almost immediate relief. Sold by Chemists at 1s. 1½d. per box, in all parts of the United States, Great Britain, and the Colonies.

## VALUABLE DISCOVERY FOR THE HAIR!

A very nicely perfumed hair-dressing, called "THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER," now being sold by most Chemists and Perfumers at 3s. 6d. per bottle, is fast superseding all "Hair Restorers," for it will positively restore in every case grey or white hair to its original colour by a few applications, without dyeing it, or leaving the disagreeable smell of most "Restorers." It makes the Hair charmingly beautiful, as well as promoting the growth of the hair on bald spots where the hair glands are not decayed. The name is on every bottle, with full particulars. Ask for "THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER."

## MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP.

**FOR CHILDREN CUTTING THEIR TEETH.** MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP for Children should always be used when Children are cutting teeth; it relieves the little sufferers at once, it produces natural quiet sleep, by relieving the child from pain, and the little cherub awakes "as bright as a button." It is perfectly harmless, and very pleasant to taste. It soothes the child, it softens the gums, allays all pain, relieves wind, regulates the bowels, and is the best known remedy for Dysentery and Diarrhoea, whether arising from teething or other causes. MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP is sold by thousands of Medicine Dealers in all parts of the world at 1s. 1½d. per bottle, and Millions of Mothers can testify to its virtue.



# KEATING'S WORM TABLETS.

A PURELY VEGETABLE SWEETMEAT, both in appearance and taste, furnishing a most agreeable method of administering a well-known remedy for **INTESTINAL or THREAD WORMS.**

It is a perfectly safe and mild preparation, and is especially adapted for Children, being as harmless in its action as it is prompt and certain in its effects, and may be taken with impunity by the most delicate constitution.

*Sold in Tins, 1s. 1½d. each, by all Druggists.*

**KEATING'S  
POWDER**

**DESTROYS**  
**BUGS  
FLEAS  
MOTHS  
BEETLES**

**Sold in Tins 6d 1/- & 2/6**

## KEATING'S COUGH LOZENGES.

Absolutely the best-known remedy ever  
made for

**COUGHS, ASTHMA, BRONCHITIS**

*Strongly recommended by the most  
eminent Doctors.*

**TINS ONLY, 1/1½ and 2/9.**

## RENOWNED REMEDIES.

### HOLLOWAY'S PILLS & OINTMENT

#### THE PILLS

Purify the Blood, correct all Disorders of the

**LIVER, STOMACH, KIDNEYS, AND BOWELS.**

They invigorate and restore to health Debilitated Constitutions, and are invaluable in all Complaints incidental to Females of all ages.

#### THE OINTMENT

Is an infallible remedy for Bad Legs, Bad Breasts, Old Wounds, Sores, Ulcers, Gout and Rheumatism.

**FOR DISORDERS OF THE CHEST IT HAS NO EQUAL.**

**FOR SORE THROATS, BRONCHITIS, COUGHS, COLDS,**

And all Skin Diseases it has no rival; and for contracted and stiff joints it acts like a charm.

Manufactured only at **THOMAS HOLLOWAY'S Establishment,**

**78, NEW OXFORD STREET (late 533, Oxford Street), LONDON.**

*And sold by all Medicine Vendors throughout the World.*



**A. STEDALL'S MANTLES.**

**A. STEDALL'S DOLMANS.**

**A. STEDALL'S JACKETS.**

**A. STEDALL'S ULSTERS.**

---

# **A. STEDALL.**

*ESTABLISHED OVER A QUARTER OF A CENTURY.*

ONE OF THE LARGEST MANUFACTURERS, IMPORTERS, & RETAILERS OF

**MANTLES, JACKETS, DOLMANS & ULSTERS**

IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

*The latest Novelties of French, German, and English Production  
at Moderate Prices, always on view at*

## **A. STEDALL'S ESTABLISHMENTS—**

11, 13, & 15, Brompton Road,	LONDON.
162, Edgware Road,	LONDON.
184a, Edgware Road,	LONDON.
123 & 124, Tottenham Court Road,	LONDON.
21 & 23, Newington Causeway,	LONDON.
91 & 93, High Street, Shoreditch,	LONDON.
87, The Promenade, Camberwell Road,	LONDON.
21, Oldham Street,	MANCHESTER.
63, Deansgate,	MANCHESTER.
69, High Street, and 1, Union Street,	BIRMINGHAM.
74, Bull Street,	BIRMINGHAM.
149, High Street,	SOUTHAMPTON.
13, George Street,	PLYMOUTH.
236, Commercial Road, Landport,	PORTSMOUTH.

---

*ALL GOODS ARE SOLD AT MODERATE PRICES AND  
EXCHANGED IF NOT APPROVED.*

**Wholesale Warehouse: Addle Hill, City, London.**

# PEARS SOAP



## A SPECIALTY FOR THE COMPLEXION

*Recommended by SIR ERASMUS WILSON, F.R.S., late President  
of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, as*

*"The most refreshing and agreeable of balms for the skin."*

---

**MDME. ADELINA PATTI** writes:—"I have  
found PEARs' SOAP *matchless for the hands  
and complexion.*"

**MRS. LANGTRY** writes:—"Since using PEARs'  
SOAP for the hands and complexion, *I have  
discarded all others.*"

**MDME. MARIE ROZE** (*Prima Donna, Her  
Majesty's Theatre*) writes:—"For preserving  
the complexion, keeping the skin soft, free  
from redness and roughness, and the hands in  
nice condition, PEARs' SOAP *is the finest  
preparation in the world.*"

**MISS MARY ANDERSON** writes:—"I have  
used PEARs' SOAP for two years with the  
greatest satisfaction, for *I find it the very best.*"

---

**PEARS' SOAP—SOLD EVERYWHERE**